NOVEMBER

65

Polyhedron™

NEWSZINE

RPGA® NETWORK

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Once upon a time

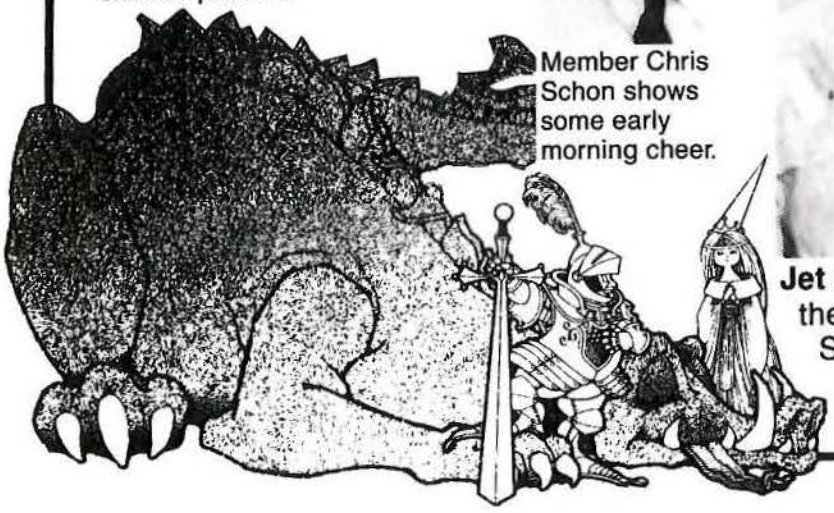
Good Times Were Known in a World Called GEN CON® Game Fair

A portion of the winning team in the AD&D® game Open tournament show their plaques and smiles.

Member Sam Adams very much in character as the world-hopping bard Blind Lemon Merlin

Member Dewy Frech reaches for the sky during the Network's skit competition.

Member Chris Schon shows some early morning cheer.



Jet Setters. Member Ken Ritchart, winner of the Network's European trip poses with Sharon Springler, who won a trip to the U.S.A. at the GEN CON European Game Fair in 1990.

About the Cover

Artist Fred Fields caught this striking pose by Charity of Holly's Mill.

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Polyhedron™ NEWSZINE

Volume 11, Number 9
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Notes From HQ

It Was The Best Of Conventions

More than 13,000 people attended this past GEN CON® Game Fair held in August at the MECCA convention center in Milwaukee, WI.

Participation in Network events was greater than ever before. We virtually filled our new stomping grounds—the Arena at MECCA.

Our benefit tournament, coordinated for the fifth consecutive year by Steve Hardinger of California, raised about $2,200 for the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. An art auction at the Wednesday members' meeting captured another $500 for the hospital.

The benefit and feature tournaments were tied to a trip to European GEN CON Game Fair. Because of the exceptional prize, feature coordinator Cheryl Frech painstakingly tracked all the participants—while managing the scoring paperwork, too!

Ken Ritchart of Denver, Colorado won the trip. Ken, a charter Network member, will attend European GEN CON Game Fair in England this month. Congratulations, Ken!

Special thanks go to Game Fair HQ Coordinator Chris Schon and to marshals and volunteers Mike Selinker, Bill Sherman, John Cereso, John Vaccaro, Craig and Shirley Robertson, Glenn Overby, Doug Behringer, Todd Keyser, Mitzi Young, Rob Nicholls, Davaleigh Finley, Joe Littrel, Bill Cory, Bob Etheridge, Dennis Everett, and Cheryl, Greg, and Emily Schwartz—and many others.

Club News

Two dozen clubs competed in the team tournament and skit competition. Congratulations to the Adventurers Guild of Wright State University for capturing first place in the club tournament. The competition was tough—the clubs were surprised with AD&D® game Oriental Adventures characters who were thrown into the Living City. In the second round, the characters found themselves in the bodies of giffs, and in the third round, the participants played Mazticans.

Other Highlights

Nearly 400 people attended the annual Network breakfast. Unfortunately, those who were at the end of the line had to wait quite a while for food. Though the caterers had prepared a mountain of eggs, sausage, and other delights, they did not anticipate how much gamers could eat. They scrambled back to the kitchen to cook more.

The art show—the best yet—was superbly handled by Network members Liz and Gary Williams.

The masquerade was masterfully emceed by member Rembert Parker.

And we sanctioned an unprecedented 39 tournaments.

This latter record was a tough one, but somehow we managed to find judges for every tournament slot—even for those events which overflowed the assigned number of tables. A hearty "thank you" goes out to all the judges who agreed to take on additional sessions when people crowded into the arena with generic tickets and to judges recruited on site who stepped in to fill slots abandoned by referees who canceled at the last minute.

Without these willing judges—including members Aaron Goldblatt, Jay Tummelson, Willi Burger, Kevin Rau, Tom Prusa, and many, many more who judged more than their fair share—we couldn't have done it.

And We Won't Do It Again

We thought we had enough support to offer 39 tournaments at the Game Fair. We certainly had more than enough players. But the judges were another matter. There are always judges who volunteer, then forget to notify us until the last minute that they cannot honor their commitments.

For example, after a slow start, it looked like we would have a full complement of judges this year. But beginning a few weeks before the Game Fair referees began calling us to cancel out of their slots for various reasons—including wanting more time to play other tournaments. These cancellations caused us to cut ticket sales to certain events, limiting the number of players.

We have a solution to the situation. We're shaving the number of scenarios we'll sanction at next year's Game Fair. We're holding the line at 25—that's 14 less than we boasted at this year's convention.

In addition, we've been keeping close track of no-show judges and judges who cancel at the last minute. These people will not be scheduled to run at future GEN CON Game Fairs.

Make Plans To Judge Now

Every year the RPGA Network begins recruiting judges in January through judge appeal forms printed in the Newszine and made available to clubs, regional directors, and conventions.

Many members are kind enough to fill out these forms and return them to HQ. However, in the past too many judges waited for us to call them and ask them to judge specific events. Because of the Network's increasing workload (because of the increasing amount of members), we no longer have the time to play phone-tag with prospective judges. If you want to judge at the GEN CON Game Fair or other conventions such as Winter Fantasy, fill out a judge appeal form (see issue 67 for a Game Fair Judge Appeal).

Prize Potions

We were flooded with entries for issue 59's potion contest. Check out *Oceans of Potions* on page 10 for a sample of the best entries. The winners are: First, Nick Kessler, *Clay;* second, David Baker, *Dark Draft;* third, Keith Radloft, *Oil of Elasticity.* HQ tips its hat to Terrence and Eric Kemperer for suggesting the "Oceans" title.

Take Care,

Jean

Letters

Fun and Games

Auto Destruction

After reading *I Blew Up the Car* by Chris Schon in issue 61, I agree the car is history. At the very least Skip should be vaporized or permanently orbiting the moon.

A GM who inserts an overmatched piece of equipment or creature into a game as his "pet" and then won't allow its destruction by ingenious character methods is doing a poor job. It seems Wes brought the car into the game in an effort either to destroy his heckler or protect a favored player. Ruling that the car and driver survived seven pounds of exploding plastique accomplishes both goals nicely. Seven pounds of plastique definitely would have vaporized the car and everyone in it and not even advanced armor would help—vehicle armor goes on the outside, not the inside. But perhaps Wes would like to sit inside a vehicle with seven pounds of exploding plastique and test this theory.

Daniel R. Ryan
Perryville, ND

Dan, after reading your letter, and blinking a few times, we sent off a copy to Chris for comments. A balky FAX machine held up the effort for awhile, but the missive reached Chris in the end. Here's what he had to say:

Wow! Lookout Wes, here comes the Dan man.

Dan, I must say that I agree with all your opinions from "shows poor GMing" up to and enthusiastically including "Skip should be vaporized." However, I guess I should put my article into context. If I had been involved in a tournament at the GEN CON® Game Fair or even a serious, on-going home campaign, I'd say blast the car and banish Wes forever. What you apparently didn't understand, Dan, was this game was neither of those. In the serious context, I should be reported to the state department for ruthlessly brutalizing and demoralizing a visitor from a foreign country. However, "serious" was not the context of my article or of the events described in it. We were all just having fun (at least I was). My intent in teasing Wes and writing the article was merely to amuse the membership and to promote the good times to be had at Network events and in gaming in general. I apologize if I was not clear on this matter. It is only a few weeks before the Game Fair as I write this, and my sources tell me Wes currently is plotting further revenge upon me at this year's convention. I'm looking forward to it. In fact, I have a few surprises of my own planned for our fine furry friend. I assure you that I never meant any ill will toward Wes, Skip, or even the car (well, maybe the car).

Chris Schon
Chicago, IL

Just Ask

I've been a Network member for over a year now, and I really enjoy receiving your Newszine. When I read Zachary Drake's letter in issue 62 about his opinions of your various departments, I decided to write and throw an idea your way. Why not include a survey in a future edition of the Newszine, listing your ongoing features and asking for the readers' opinions of them? You could also leave a box for comments and suggestions regarding new departments and features.

I believe a survey would encourage more readers to share their opinions with you than what is generated by the few people who write in on their own.

Personally, I dislike *Wolff & Byrd* and I wouldn't exactly be devastated if it suddenly disappeared from the Newszine. I also have little use for *The Living Galaxy* and *Into the Dark*. On the positive side, I love *The Living City, Bookwyrms, The Everwinking Eye,* and *The New Rogues Gallery*. I enjoy your contests the most, however, and the more you have the happier I am. Please consider my suggestion and keep up the good work.

Oliver Homann
Tallahassee, FL

As it happens, Oliver, we have been discussing a survey. When and if it sees print, however, it will concentrate on technical items such as when Newszines arrive, how consistently they arrive, and their condition. Our own experience tends to support your assumption that we'll get a better response if we give readers a form to fill out. Forms, however, force the reader's response into a standard format. We prefer completely personalized opinions expressed in letters—even in letters as brief as yours. Survey or no survey, the Newszine staff looks forward to a steady stream of commentary from our readers.

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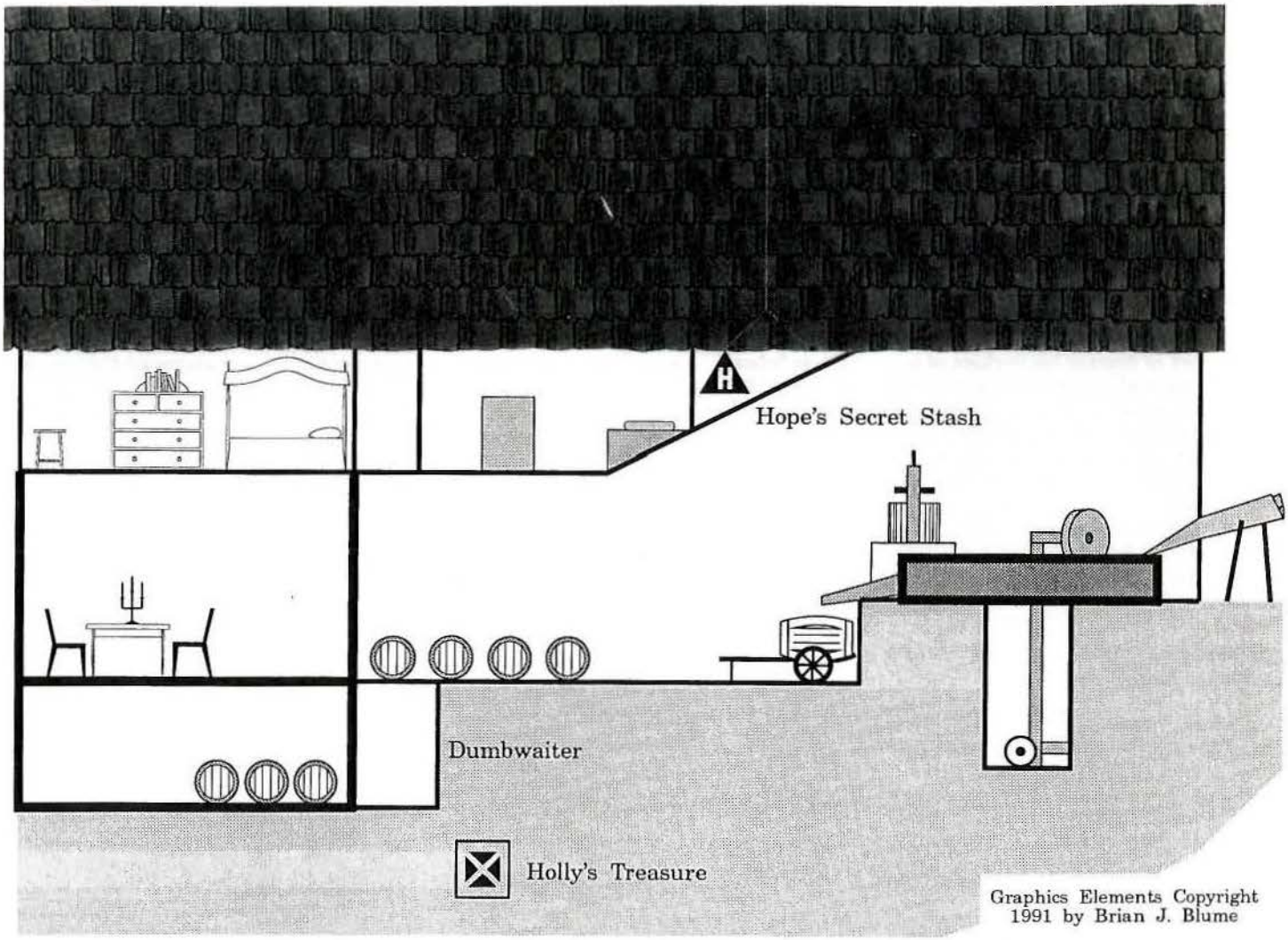
The Living City

Holly's Mill



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by Greg Failing and Wayne Straiton

Ravens Bluff's only cider mill is nestled on a slope near a small stream that has been carefully dammed for power. Water is channeled over a wheel, which provides energy for the grinder.

The mill's most striking feature is not its operation, but its existence. The building and all of its interior rooms were fashioned from a solid piece of black granite.

Holly, the mill's owner, is a druidess, and she constructed her business by spending many months *stone shaping* the rock. As a finishing touch, she placed her family's coat of arms on the chimney.

Each fall Holly buys apples from local orchards. The apples are dumped into a large hopper which feeds the grinder. The grinder is a 12-foot-diameter stone trough into which the apples are rolled. A stone wheel rolls around in the trough, mashing the apples. Juice flows out the bottom of the trough and into barrels on the lower level. After the wheel has ground the apples two or three times, the solids are shoveled into one of the presses.

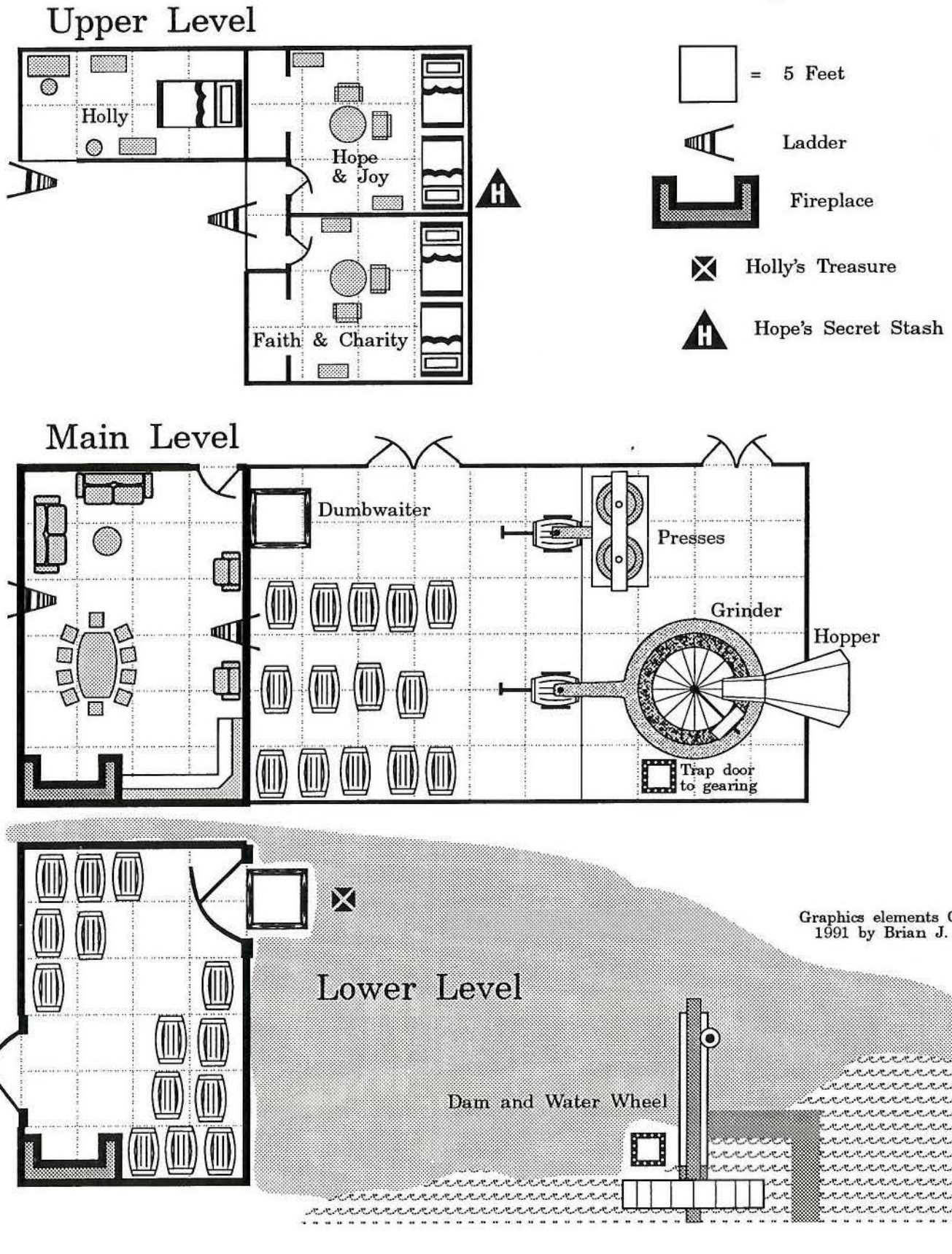
The mill's presses consist of large oak baskets which ride up and down on a shaft, crushing the apples. This juice also is collected in barrels on the lower level. Any remaining solids are loaded onto farmers' wagons to be used as pig food.

Holly sells most of her cider immediately. Some of it goes to local taverns and inns, but much of it is purchased by merchants to be taken to other towns. A few barrels are sold to street vendors, who pull the cider around town in special carts.

Holly's cider is prized throughout Ravens Bluff. Certain types of apples the druidess buys yield especially fine juice that can be stored for up to six months if kept cold.

The druidess keeps a supply of this cider in the mill's "cold room," a chamber beneath her living area. The cider barrels are moved there with a manual elevator and pulley system. And the room is opened only once or twice a month when the barrels are removed for

Holly's Mill



Graphics elements Copyright 1991 by Brian J. Blume

sale. Some of this juice is set aside and allowed to ferment, producing hard cider which is used for special occasions.

During the winter months the mill is cleaned from top to bottom by Holly's daughters. The druidess harvests ice and stores it in several root cellars, packing it in sawdust and covering it with canvas. She sells some of the ice in the spring, fetching only a fair price because Ravens Bluff has other ice houses.

In the spring and summer Holly busies herself making sure the trees are pollinated and that animals and insects do not eat the buds or growing apples. During this time she supplements the family income by writing druidic scrolls that she sells for a healthy profit.

Holly's daughters, or "The Graham Girls," as they are known around town, have a natural beauty ladies in the nobility envy. There is a considerable amount of infighting between the sisters.

In the mill, Faith and Charity share one bedroom, while Joy and Hope share another; this keeps the squabbles limited.

The girls enjoy swimming in the pond near the cider mill—this seems to be the only time they truly get along. Holly usually sits on the bank in rabbit form to spy on them.

Holly has made certain all her daughters know how to read and write, and she has had limited success trying to raise them as country girls because of the influence of the big city of Ravens Bluff.

Holly and her daughters have no idea their father, Sir Ian Glae James Graham is not departed from the world. Ian resides in a scarlet marble sword called "Red Death," an enchanted blade Holly gave him on their wedding day.

On his last mission, Sir Ian Glae James lay dying in a ravine at the hands of an evil Talos cleric. Ian was overcome with grief for his young wife and children. Tyr looked favorably down at the paladin, merging Ian's essence into the red marble sword. The god decided if the sentient blade ever found its way back to Holly, Ian would be restored to human form.

Lady Holly Graham

11th Level Female Human Druid

STR: 16
INT: 14
WIS: 15
DEX: 15
CON: 12
CHR: 15
AC Normal: 9
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 40
Alignment: Neutral
Languages: Common, Centaur, Dryad, Elvish, Satyr
Weapon Proficiencies: Club, dagger, sling, staff
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Agriculture (14), cooking (14), fishing (14), fire building (14), swimming (16), seamstress (14), weaving (13), herbalism (12), read/write Common (16), local history(15)
Magic Items: *Potion of longevity, elixir of health, buckle knife +3, cloak of plenty**
Druid spells/day: 7 5 4 3 2 1

* denotes new magic item, see end of article

The widow Lady Holly Graham is 5′ 4″ tall and weighs 130 pounds. She moved to Ravens Bluff 18 years ago, when she was age 17 and the new bride of the paladin Sir Ian Glae James Graham.

Holly gained her title through marriage and considers it valueless. However, the title makes her popular with the upper crust.

Holly loved Ian from the moment she saw him. The paladin had happened by her druidic community in the mountains east of Ravens Bluff. The community was being attacked by Talos raiders, and he stepped in to help repel the force.

Ian returned several times after that to check on Holly. On one fateful day when he turned to leave, she left with him.

They married shortly before traveling to Ravens Bluff. Once in the Living City, Ian sought a grant from the Council of Lords in exchange for services he performed for the city in the Mountain Campaigns. With the grant money the couple built a cider mill north of the city. The construction was finished just before the birth of the Graham's daughters—quadruplets they named Faith, Hope, Charity, and Joy.

The Grahams' lives were content until Sir Ian Glae James rode off on a mission for the Lord Mayor. That was 10 years ago, and he never returned. Holly vowed never to remarry.

Holly is the consummate mother, always worrying about her daughters' needs. Although she would rather return to the forest where she feels most comfortable, it is her protective instinct for her girls that keeps her in Ravens Bluff. Besides, she reasons, the girls are of marrying age, and she expects it will not be long before she is alone again.

Holly has decided she would like nothing better than to marry off one of her daughters and let the girl and her new husband continue the family business. That would allow Holly to return to the wild.

Holly has vibrant hazel eyes and long brown hair which she wears tied in a long braid on the left side of her head. With her striking good looks, she easily passes for a woman 10 years her junior.

Because of her beauty, she has yet to find a reason to drink her *potion of longevity*. She stores the *potion* with her *cloak of plenty* in a compartment far beneath the solid stone floor where *detect magic* cannot reveal their presence. The *cloak* was a wedding present from Sir Ian Glae James.

Faith Graham

1st Level Female Human Cleric

STR: 10
INT: 13
WIS: 17
DEX: 13
CON: 16
CHR: 17
AC Normal: 10
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 8
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common
Weapon Proficiencies: Hammer, staff
Cleric spells/day: 4

Faith, like her other three sisters, is 5′ 6″ tall and weighs 120 pounds. She has steel gray eyes and short brunette hair. She is the sensible and pragmatic one, often referred to as "big sister" by the others.

Faith does not mind being the controlling force of the quartet. She believes someone needs to look out after her sisters.

Faith rarely smiles, often being mistaken as being stern or troubled. She is demure, the last one to bait a hook while fishing, and the only one to jump on a chair when a mouse runs by.

Her first love is the temple of Helm;

her second is gardening. Faith's vice is hard cider. She loves to drink it, has built up a tolerance to it, and can gulp down a mug with the best of them.

Hope Graham

1st Level Female Human Thief

STR: 10
INT: 16
WIS: 12
DEX: 17
CON: 12
CHR: 17
AC Normal: 7
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 5
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Languages: Common
Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, dagger
Non Weapon Proficiencies: Rope use (17), swimming(10), appraising (16), forgery (16), read lips (14), read/write Common (18)

Thief Abilities

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	HN	CW	RL
55	20	5	40	30	10	70	—

Hope has straight blond hair that extends to the back of her knees and flashing blue eyes that are ever active.

Hope has no trouble attracting the attention of the young men of Ravens Bluff.

Still, she often has difficulty keeping their attention, as she is a cynic—always looking for people's faults, always trying to figure the angles, and always making sure there is something in it for her.

She resents her father for abandoning the family. And she has vowed to only marry a man who will stay by her side.

Hope can be found in the company of handsome men who can supply her with fine wine, food, and a multitude of presents.

On rare occasions she frequents lower class taverns and inns where she picks pockets. She hides her riches in a secret compartment over her bed.

Hope is a city girl—with no use for the country. It would take little coaxing to get her to sign on with an adventuring group.

Charity Graham

1st Level Female Human Paladin

STR: 14
INT: 15
WIS: 13
DEX: 17
CON: 10
CHR: 17
AC Normal: 7
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 10
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common
Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, great sword, lance, dagger
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Cooking (15), dancing (17), animal handling (15), swimming (14), etiquette (17), riding land-based (16), read/write Common (18)
Charity has violet eyes and long, black wavy hair make her stand out in a crowd.

She enjoys the attention her appearance brings, and she hopes to one day attract the affections of a paladin like her legendary father.

In her youth, she was a daddy's girl. She loved her father dearly and misses him terribly. Trying to honor her father, she became a paladin.

Her truthful nature causes her to "snitch" on those committing wrongful acts. She will not willingly hurt anyone or anything. To this end she has become an animal lover and a vegetarian.

Charity is tolerant of others' opinions, and she tries to give everyone the benefit of the doubt.

Joy Graham

1st Level Female Human Fighter

STR: 17
INT: 10
WIS: 14
DEX: 13
CON: 17
CHR: 17
AC Normal: 10
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 7
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common
Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, long bow, dagger, spear
NonWeapon Proficiencies: Riding land-based (17), singing (17), fishing (13), swimming (17), animal lore (10)
Joy has emerald eyes and flowing red hair that looks stunning in the sun—which she loves to bask under.

Joy is a tomboy, spending most of her time outdoors. She is independent and carefree, believing that everyone needs to lead her own life, be responsible for her own decisions, and answer only to herself. This attitude makes Joy the most accepting of Hope.

Joy seems always happy, bouncing out of bed as the sun edges above the horizon.

New Magic Items

Red Death: Bastard sword +4, Int 17, Ego 22, Alignment LG, abilities (once a day) *telepathy, read languages, detect magic, detect evil, strength,* and *heal.* Red Death can speak Common and Elvish. The sword has a special purpose to defeat evil priests, and its special purpose power is *disintegrate* three times a day.

Sir Ian considers his present situation a curse, a punishment developed by Tyr for allowing himself to be slain by an evil cleric. Although Ian can speak, he has taken a vow of silence, and he will not break that vow until he believes he has redeemed himself.

Red Death's current whereabouts are a mystery.

Cloak of Plenty: This cloak of black wool lined with deep-purple satin radiates an aura of alteration magic. It keeps its wearer warm and dry in any climate or weather. It gives the wearer a saving throw bonus of +4 against all forms of elemental attacks. The cloak is so comfortable as to permit the recovery of hit points while the wearer sleeps, as if he or she were resting in a comfortable bed. The cloak has other properties. It conveys ultravision to its wearer. There are 12 hidden pockets inside which open to an extra-dimensional space. They contain the following items, which the cloak refills daily: 1/2 pound of cheese, 1/2 pound of fresh cinnamon raisin bread (warm), 1 pound of spare ribs, 4 ears of steamed and buttered sweet corn, 1 apple, 1 orange, 1 pear, 1/2 pint honey, 1/2 pound cracked walnuts, 1 quart strawberries, 1 quart cold apple cider, 1 quart cool water, 1 hunting knife. ❑

Plentiful Potions

D20 Roll	Item	Experience Point Value	Gold Piece Sale Value
1	Aging	250	500
2	Clarity	550	1,100
3	Clay	950	4,250
4	Cold Resistance	250	500
5	Craftsmanship	400	800
6	Dark Draft	500	1,500
7	Deafness	200	800
8	Digging	400	1,200
9	Fire Vulnerability	50	250
10	Fluidness	750	1,500
11	Foul Water	900	5,000
12	Fright	50	250
13	Lethargy	50	250
14	Luck	500	2,500
15	Magic Resistance	900	3,000
16	Midas Touch	500	1,500
17	Open Mind	250	500
18	Reverse Ventriloquism	300	500
19	Sleep Bestowing	500	1,000
20	Vulnerability	50	250

D20 Roll	Item	Experience Point Value	Gold Piece Sale Value
1	Deftness	500	800-1,500
2	Forewarning	600	1,200
3	Forgetfulness	50	250
4	Fur Growth	125	250
5	Greensprouting	300	600
6	Iron Handedness	300	600
7	Language Learning	1,000	5,000
8	Lightning Form	500	1,500
9	Metal Immunity	1,000	3,750
10	Mirror Eyes	1,800	10,000
11	Scent Neutralization	100	250 or 500
12	Snake Crawling	250	500
13	Superior Healing	800	2,500
14	Sustenance	250	350
15	Thinness	250	600
16	Ugliness	50	250
17	Useful Appendages	250	800
18	Visions	50	250
19	Water of Obscurement	250	500
20	Worm Calling	250	250

D20 Roll	Item	Experience Point Value	Gold Piece Sale Value
1	Bouncing	250	400
2	Bubbles	50	250
3	Danger Detection	250	600
4	Digestion	200	500
5	Dwarfswater	100	200
6	Drunkenness	50	250
7	Noxious Resistance	400	900
8	Photosynthesis	400	2,500
9	Physical Enhancement	300	800
10	Reflection	300	1,000
11	Rest	250	500
12	Revivification	500	2,500
13	Safe Consumption	300	500
14	Sanity	500	1,000
15	Sensory Enhancement	250	500
16	Singing	200	500
17	Sobriety	200	400
18	Sunlight Resistance	400	1,500
19	Tragic Heroism	250	400
20	Truth	400	1,200

D20 Roll	Item	Experience Point Value	Gold Piece Sale Value
1	Absorption	700	1,200
2	All-Purpose Healing	200	600
3	Blindness	50	250
4	Corrosive Touch	700	1,200
5	Enchantment	400	1,400
6	Disenchantment, Permanent	2,000	6,000
7	Ghostliness	600	1,800
8	Golden Silence	250	400
9	Good Humor	500	2,000
10	Heroic Action	350	800
11	Lycanthropy	50	500
12	Magic Enhancement	500	1,800
13	Magnetism	100	250
14	Monster Creation	200	400
15	Pestilence	100	900
16	Undead	700	1,200
17	Soul-Chilling	750	4,000
18	Weakness	50	250
19	Vampirism	500	1,600
20	Zorbo Fingers	500	800

Treasure Tables

D20 Roll	Item	Experience Point Value	Gold Piece Sale Value
1	Archmagedom	450	1,500
2	Creation	250	400
3	Dragon Armor	400	1,600
4	Infravision	200	500
5	Insulation	250	600
6	Kindness	250	400
7	Magnification	250	800
8	Magic Shielding	450	900
9	Mind Focusing	800	1,500
10	Nodozze	250	500
11	Pseudo Treant	300	800
12	Psionic Ability	1,200	5,000
13	Rage	250	400
14	Rainbow Bridge	1,500	4,000
15	Recall	600	2,000
16	Rejuvenation	250	500
17	Resuscitation	300	600
18	Scrying	700	1,000
19	Spelljamming	600	2,500
20	Wizardry	350	900

D20 Roll	Item	Experience Point Value	Gold Piece Sale Value
1	Advanced Meditation	300	700
2	Alternate Profession	250	700
3	Anti-Magic	800	3,000
4	Confusion	50	250
5	Contact Disruption	400	800
6	Dragon Breath	500	1,400
7	Essence Transference	300	1,000
8	Inner Strength	250	700
9	Life Stealing	800	4,000
10	Life Suspension	500	1,500
11	Mage Wine	400	900
12	Magic Peas	100	250
13	Mirage	1,000	3,500
14	Opposite Alignment	800	1,600
15	Power	500	1,300
16	Psychotic Killer	50	800
17	Sharp Eyes	300	1,200
18	Sleepy Breath	250	500
19	Tongues	250	600
20	Venom	900	4,000

Oils

D20 Roll	Item	Experience Point Value	Gold Piece Sale Value
1	Chameleon Power	350	700
2	Childishness	50	8,000
3	Clean And Dry	100	250
4	Eternal Slumber	50	1,000
5	Fresh Air	350	700
6	Genius	300	800
7	Gluttony	50	100
8	Gray Slumber	250	600
9	Horn of Plenty	250	500
10	Immiscibility, Protection from	500	1,000
11	Immunity	2,000	40,000
12	Kanzaz	400	1,400
13	Luminescence	250	800
14	Magic Blocking	400	2,000
15	Petrification	50	800
16	Shadow	400	1,000
17	Stone Form	500	1,100
18	Teleportation	500	1,900
19	Toad Skin	500	1,000
20	Underground Awareness	500	1,100

D20 Roll	Item	Experience Point Value	Gold Piece Sale Value
1	Oil of Animation	200	800
2	Oil of Armor	500	1,800
3	Oil of Buoyancy	250	700
4	Oil of Dexterity	500	800
5	Oil of the Dryad	250	700
6	Oil of Elasticity	250	900
7	Oil of the Feast	250	500
8	Oil of Hair Replacement	150	400
9	Oil of Immovability	350	1,600
10	Oil of Lighting	250	500
11	Oil of Lightning Bolts	50	500
12	Oil of Lorn	250	600
13	Oil of Metal Fatigue	400	1,900
14	Oil of Phosphorus	350	800
15	Oil of Preservation	500	1,600
16	Oil of Rust Proofing	400	1,900
17	Oil of Scents	50	250
18	Oil Of Scribes	500	1,300
19	Oil of Scrying	250	700
20	Oil of Unlocking	300	800

Oceans Of Potions

New Magic For The AD&D® Game

Absorption: This powerful concoction protects the drinker from one specific kind of energy or attack form for 6 rounds per draught. The drinker swallows the potion and concentrates on a particular type of attack, such as fire, and the potion's effects allow him to ignore 20 points of fire damage per round for 6 rounds. These potions are usually found in flasks that contain four doses. The type of attack named must be specific. For example "melee attacks" is too general, but "blunt attacks," or "slashing attacks" is specific.

Advanced Meditation: A psionic character imbibing this potion gains a +2 on all Power Scores in his primary discipline and a +1 to all Power Scores in other disciplines for 1d8+4 rounds. A rare 5% of these potions also negate the ill effects of rolling a natural 20 on a power check. These potions are useless to non-psionic characters.

Aging: Drinking this potion increases the imbiber's age by 1d20 years. His ability scores change as detailed in the *Player's Handbook*.

All-Purpose Healing: This elixir, made from casterous fish, cures any illness or disease (including lycanthropy). The elixir, which does not heal hit points, tastes terrible, incapacitating the imbibing character for 1d6 rounds.

Alternate Profession: This potion allows the drinker to temporarily gain the first level abilities of any class of his choosing. This includes abilities such as cleric's turning undead and ranger's tracking. The duration of the potion is 2d4 turns.

Anti-Magic: When this potion is ingested, it *dispels magic* on the imbiber, negating any spell or spell-like effect he is under. For example, this will negate *charms, geas,* and curses.

Archmagedom: This is similar to a *potion of wizardry*, except it grants a wizard a temporary increase of five levels for 1d4+2 turns. This improves the effected character's hit dice, "to hit" ability, and saving throws. In addition, it allows the character to cast his spells as if he were five levels higher. The drinker does not gain any additional spells.

Blindness: When a character quaffs this potion, he is blinded, per the second level wizard spell of the same name. Its effects last for 2d4 turns.

Bouncing: The drinker of this potion will begin to bounce 1d6+4 feet above the ground with each step he takes. The effects of the potion last 1d10+10 turns.

Bubbles: Upon consuming this potion, the imbiber begins to spew forth a mass of bubbles. If the imbiber closes his mouth, the bubbles spew forth from his ears and nose. The duration of the potion is one week, and during that the time the effected character makes all attacks and saving throws at -2.

Chameleon Power: This small potion appears to contain a swirling mass of colors. When quaffed, it causes the imbiber to blend into the background for 1d4 turns. If the character remains immobile, there is only a 10% chance others will see him. However, if he moves that chance increases to 30%. A *detect invisibility* spell will not reveal someone using a *chameleon power* potion.

Childishness: A character quaffing this cursed potion regresses physically into the body of a child, age 5. The character remains unchanged intellectually, and his equipment and clothes are left at adult size. The potion's effects on the character are permanent unless a *restoration* spell is cast on him within three weeks, otherwise only a full *wish* can restore the character.

Clarity: This potion works on the character drinking it as the sixth level wizard spell *true seeing*, granting this ability for 1d6 turns. The potion also negates the effects of a *feeblemind* spell.

Clay: The imbiber of this potion, and all clothing and items worn, turns into soft sculpting clay for two turns. During this time, the clay can be sculpted by anyone, thereby changing the imbiber's appearance. When the potion's duration expires, the drinker turns back to flesh—with any changes made to the clay now a permanent change to his body or clothing. Only a *wish* can return the imbiber to his original form.

Clean And Dry: When this potion is quaffed, the imbiber's body, clothes, and equipment becomes immediately clean and dry—as if he had taken a bath and had his possessions steam cleaned.

Cold Resistance: Drinking this potion gives an individual magical invulnerability to all forms of normal cold, such as snow, ice, and arctic winds. In addition, it gives resistance to the cold generated by spells such as *ice storm, wall of ice,* and *cone of cold*, and it offers resistance from icy dragon breath—all damage from such attacks are -2 per each die of damage. The potion's duration is 1d4+4 turns.

Confusion: The imbiber of this potion instantly becomes confused for 1d4+4 rounds and will either:
1. Stand still and do nothing.
2. Attack the nearest creature.
3. Give away his weapon.
4. Wander off in a daze.

Contact Disruption: When consumed, this potion removes one tangent gained by a psionicist who is attempting to establish contact with the imbiber. For example, if the imbiber is under a two-finger contact, he will be reduced to a one-finger contact. The potion lasts 1d4 rounds, and it eliminates one tangent each round.

Corrosive Touch: This mixture gives the drinker the ability to dissolve material with the touch of his hands. Once activated, the corrosive touch remains for 2d12 rounds whether the affected character wants it to or not. The character can dissolve one cubic foot of non-living material such as soft stone or wood per round if he actively tries to touch as much material as possible. This ability can be used to cut holes in walls, sculpt statues, create handholds in sheer cliffs, etc. Tougher materials, such as gemstones, hard rock, or metal, dissolve at half the rate, and acid-resistant materials, such as ceramics or crystal dissolve at one quarter the rate. Involuntary corrosive touches dissolve one to four cubic inches of material, depending on its strength. Enchanted items gain a saving throw vs. acid. The corrosive hands are deadly in combat, inflicting 1d8 points of damage per successful hit.

Craftsmanship: These potions, created by the gnomish wizard Fip Cranktip, improve a character's nonweapon

proficiencies. The imbiber quaffs the potion while thinking about a particular skill, and the potion grants him a "20" ability in that skill for 24 hours. Multiple *craftsmanship* potions can be consumed without fear of miscibility results. However, each potion imbibed produces a side effect, which also lasts 24 hours. Roll on the table below to determine which side effect the character receives.

1-15	Grows chicken feathers
16-24	Gains X-ray vision
25-31	Facial hair turns green
32-37	Goblinoids of the opposite sex are attracted to the user
38-45	Glows in the dark
46-55	Shrinks to 50% of normal height
56-60	Transported to the ethereal plane
61-67	Continuously bloats up with air and releases it
68-78	Turns into a 4' long yellow butterfly with human hands
79-94	Gains 20 pounds
95-00	Roll twice more

Creation: This potion does nothing if ingested. However, if it is poured on the ground, it creates a permanent object. The object is most often the one pictured on the potion's container. The majority of potions create furniture, shields, ladders, and other useful, non-magical items.

Danger Detection: This powerful elixir is effective for 1d4 + 4 turns. It enables the character drinking it to detect anything representing immediate or potential danger to him within 100 feet indoors and 100 yards outdoors. It detects traps, vipers, or any objects or creatures threatening to him. The user can detect dangers which are invisible, ethereal, astral, out of phase, hidden, or disguised. The user feels a tingling at the back of his neck when faced with this danger. However, the exact nature of the danger is not revealed. For example, while he can detect a dangerous trap, he will not be able to determine what type of trap it is.

Dark Draft Of The Voodoo Masters: This four-dose potion was created by savage wizards practicing voodoo magic. Unlike other elixirs, a *dark draft* is meant to be mixed with other potions. The user must mix one-fourth of a *dark draft* potion with any other magical potion. Further, a fingernail, lock of hair, or other bit of organic matter from the intended target must be added to the concoction. When the potion is consumed, the drinker thinks of the intended target, and if that target is within 50 miles, the potion takes effect on that person. The victim is not allowed a saving throw. For example, a character who mixed a *dark draft* potion with an *elixir of madness* can inflict that madness upon his target. A *dark draft* does not work with poisons or non-magical oils.

Deafness: This potion affects the character drinking it as the second level wizard spell of the same name. However, the saving throw allowed is versus poison instead of spells. Its effects last for 1d4 turns.

Deftness: This family of five potions is sought after by those needing extra quickness. The potions increase Dexterity to various levels. Consult the table below.

Dexterity	**Duration**
Dex 17	1 day
Dex 18	12 hours
Dex 19	9 hours
Dex 20	6 hours
Dex 21	2 hours

Digestion: The character consuming this potion immediately finds all organic substances appetizing. Further, he can digest any organic substance without any ill effects. This effect concerns only digestion, so while a plank of wood can provide nourishment, the character must break it into pieces before he can swallow it. The duration is 1d4 days.

Digging: This potion enables the drinker to dig through dirt, rock, or stone with his bare hands. In this manner, the individual can travel through the ground—at his normal movement rate—by creating a tunnel roughly his own size. However, any tunnel the digger creates has an 80% chance of collapsing behind him. While this could be useful in undermining castle walls, it means that other characters will be taking a risk if they choose to follow the digger. As long as the digger keeps moving, he is assumed to have an air pocket around himself. However, if he pauses for more than three rounds or encounters a mishap, such as running into an underground lake, the character's air supply will rapidly disappear. A single potion lasts for 1d4 + 4 turns.

Disenchantment, Permanent: These very rare unguents work the same way as *Oil of Disenchantment* as described in the DMG, except that the effects are permanent when used on an item. If the potion is ingested, the drinker suffers 2d12 points of damage.

Dragon Armor: When this potion is consumed, a suit of fine, dragon scale armor appears on the character. The color of the dragon scale is determined by the color of the potion. The magical armor bestows an Armor Class of 4, lasts 1d6 + 4 turns, and can be used by any character class.

Dragon Breath: This elixir enables the drinker to imitate a dragon's breath. The character can breathe three times, once each round, before the potion's duration expires. Each breath does 2d10 points of damage. The breath is a 10-foot long cone that is 4 inches wide at the character's mouth and 10 feet wide at the base. Roll on the table below to determine the type of breath each time the effected character breathes.

ROLL	EFFECT
1-2	Red Dragon/Flames
3-4	Blue Dragon/Lightning
5-6	Green Dragon/Chlorine
7-8	Black Dragon/Acid
9-10	White Dragon/Ice

Drunkenness: Smelling strongly of an exotic liquor, this potion instantly intoxicates the imbiber for 4d6 turns. All attack rolls, saving throws, and proficiency checks made by the character suffer a -4 penalty. The character's senses and judgment are clouded, and his behavior is irrational. At the end of the potion's duration, the character suffers from a hangover equal to the number of turns the potion was in effect.

Dwarfswater: One vial of this highly-prized mixture will turn up to 30 gallons of water into fine, dwarven spirits.

Enchantment: When poured over a weapon or armor, this liquid imbues the object with a temporary +1 enchantment. It takes one potion to cover each of the following: a shield, a suit of armor, two melee weapons, six daggers, or 20 arrows or bolts. The duration of the potion is 24 hours.

Essence Transference: Upon drinking this potion, the imbiber gains the ability to acquire hit points from others he successfully touches. The imbiber steals 1d10 hit points per touch, adding them to his own. The gained hit points are temporary, lasting the potion's duration of 2d8 rounds. Victims cannot be reduced to below 0 hit points, and they can regain their hit points through healing spells and rest.

Eternal Slumber: When this clear, odorless potion is consumed, the drinker falls into a deep sleep. He can only be awakened with a *remove curse, limited wish,* or *wish.*

Fire Vulnerability: This potion, frequently identified as a *potion of fire resistance*, causes the imbiber to become very sensitive to heat, thus suffering double the amount of damage caused by normal fire. In addition, the imbiber also suffers +2 to each die of damage sustained from molten lava, magical fire, and fiery dragon breath. If a saving throw is applicable, the imbiber suffers a -4 penalty. The effects of this potion last for 1d4 + 4 turns.

Fluidness: The imbiber of this potion—and all items worn or carried by him—turns into a one-gallon puddle of liquid. The effects of this potion last for 1d8 hours, and during that time the character can flow through cracks and grates, under doors, and conceal himself in ponds, pools of rain, and other bodies of liquid. Attacks against a character in this form are at -2, and he suffers only half damage. However, ice-based attacks cause an extra +1 per die of damage.

Forewarning: Many rulers have become dependent upon this magical draught. It is a potent brew which allows the imbiber to enter a trance for 1 turn and "see" the future. This vision is a possible future, and the imbiber learns an important piece of information regarding that future event.

Forgetfulness: Imbibing this honey-flavored potion causes amnesia for 2d10 days. The drinker does not remember his name, friends, faces, or other things of importance.

Foul Water: If this liquid is consumed, the imbiber must save versus poison or become ill for three days. The liquid is intended to be added to other liquids to change them into stale, undrinkable water. Further, *foul water* doubles the potency of poisons and ruins magical potions. The contents of a single container will change up to 100,000 cubic feet (750,000 gallons) of pure, fresh water into polluted, salty water. It will turn up to 100 cubic feet of wine or oil (750 gallons) into a mild acid. The effects of the potion are permanent, although the liquid may be purified magically after an initial period of 5d8 rounds.

Fresh Air: When this potion vial is opened, up to 125,000 cubic feet of air is cleansed, making it safe to breathe. It neutralizes any gas, mist, or vapor. There is no effect if the potion is consumed.

Fright: This liquid temporarily causes the imbiber to decrease three levels in hit points, combat ability, and saving throws for 4d4 rounds. If the character is slain while at reduced hit points, he is dead, but can be resurrected normally.

Fur Growth: This thick liquid is either brown or black and tastes like roasted game. When imbibed, the drinker immediately sprouts a shaggy coat of fur, six inches thick. The fur lasts 1d4 + 7 hours, after which time it falls off harmlessly. It protects the character from temperatures to -30 degrees, but tends to make wearing armor impossible. The potion is prized by adventurers planning arctic forays.

Genius: The character who quaffs this potion gains +4 to his intelligence for 2d4 + 4 rounds.

Ghostliness: This potion gives the drinker, and any non-living items he is

carrying and wearing, the ability to pass through all other objects for 2d4 + 4 turns, as if he were a ghost. Further, the effected character is immune to normal weapons while in this state, and magical weapons inflict only half damage. While in this state, the ghost character cannot pick up objects, cannot cast spells that require material components, and cannot physically melee others.

Gluttony: This potion causes the imbiber to become insatiably hungry, consuming everything edible in sight—or any food he knows is hidden—for 1d12 rounds.

Golden Silence: This renders the vocal chords of the imbiber useless. All spells requiring a vocal incantation cannot be cast until after the effects of the potion wear off in 1d4 + 4 turns. This potion is usually found in a flask containing three doses.

Good Humor: This potion, if imbibed, grants the drinker an uplifting feeling and cheery disposition. However, the potion is more useful if a stick is inserted into the vial. When this occurs, the potion freezes and can be pulled from the vial by the stick. When the frosty version of the potion is eaten, the character gains the cheery disposition mentioned above, will need no further nourishment for the day, and operates as if he were under a *bless* spell. The duration of the potion in either form is 2d12 hours.

Gray Slumber: The imbiber of this potion falls into a deep slumber for 1d6 + 4 turns. The character cannot be awakened unless a *dispel magic* is cast. Further, the character appears dead, and his skin takes on a gray pallor. This potion is often used to feign death.

Greensprouting: This potion allows the drinker to *polymorph* at will into a green, leafy bush with thick bark. The bush takes one-half damage from bludgeoning weapons and has an AC of 5. The potion's duration is 2d10 days; 10% of the potions cause the bush to become rooted to the spot, not allowing the character to change back to his proper form until the potion wears off.

Heroic Action: This elixir grants a wizard, priest, or rogue the ability to perform heroically in battle for 2d4 rounds by granting them an additional 4d6 hit points. The hit point bonus vanishes after the potion's duration expires.

Horn of Plenty: This magical elixir allows the imbiber to create food and wine. One cubic foot of food and one gallon of wine can be created per round for 1d8 + 4 rounds. All of the food is fresh, roasted or chilled as desired by the imbiber, and the wine is of good quality.

Immiscibility, protection from: When this potion is quaffed, it grants the imbiber the ability to drink two additional potions without fear of incompatibility. The two potions must be consumed within 8 rounds of drinking the *potion of protection from immiscibility*. If a character drinks two potions after that time has elapsed, he truly faces the possibility of immiscibility.

Immunity: This very rare, very potent elixir confers upon the imbiber a permanent immunity. A few of these potions are cursed. Consult the table below:

Roll	Benefit
1	Immunity To Normal Weapons
2-4	Immunity To Death Magic
5-7	Poison, instant death, no saving throw
8-10	Immunity To Poison
11-14	Immunity To Aging
15-20	Immunity To Disease

Inner Strength: Psionic characters imbibing this potion have their current Psionic Strength Points increased by 35%, allowing the PSPs to be increased above their normal maximum. The effects of this potion are not cumulative with the Harness Subconscious proficiency. The PSPs added by the potion remain until the points are used. The potion has no effect on non-psionicists.

Infravision: This potion bestows upon a human 60′ infravision for 1d8 turns. Characters possessing infravision will have their ranges increased by 60′.

Insulation: This potion gives the drinker +4 on all saves versus electrical attacks, including blue dragon breath, and reduces damage suffered by 2 points per die.

Iron Handedness: Drinking this potion turns a character's hands into an iron-like hardness, enabling him to deflect weapons barehanded. The hardened hands are able to chop through wood or can be used as melee weapons, inflicting 1d12 points of damage per successful hit. The effects of the potion last 1d6 + 4 rounds.

Kanzaz: When this potion is consumed, the imbiber is instantly transported to the place of his birth.

Kindness: This elixir grants the imbiber good manners for 1d10 days. The drinker has an overwhelming desire to be kind and polite. The character will only say kind things to all people he meets. While the potion's effects do not hinder the character's ability to fight, the character will not fight unless first attacked.

Language Learning: When consumed, this potion allows the imbiber to master an unknown language by concentrating on a race of people or a type of creature. Each flask typically contains four doses of the potion, each dose enabling a new language to be learned. The languages learned are permanent.

Lethargy: This potion acts as the third level wizard spell *slow* to the person drinking it. Its effects last for 1d4 + 4 turns.

Life Stealing: This potion gives the drinker the ability to drain levels as a vampire does. The duration of the potion is 1d4 + 4 rounds, and during that time he can drain two life levels each time he successfully touches someone. The victim is allowed a saving throw versus spell to avoid the level drain.

Life Suspension: The imbiber of this potion falls into a coma-like state for 30 days. During this time he heals as if he were resting. This potion is often used by adventurers on characters who have been poisoned or cursed; buying time to find cures. The duration of the coma-like state only can be interrupted by a *haste* spell.

Lightning Form: Drinking this magical liquid causes the user and anything he is wearing or carrying, to assume a vaguely humanoid electrical form. This form, which lasts 5d4 rounds, is able to fly at a speed of 96, MC D. Each round the form can attack all creatures within a 10′ radius by arcing from target to target, striking as if each victim were AC 10, and causing 1d6 + 2 points of damage per successful attack. Because of the speed the character is moving there is a 25% chance of striking any friendly targets within range.

Luck: This unusual elixir grants the drinker great luck for 1d4 days, by enabling him to use a non-magical weapon to successfully strike creatures that are normally struck by +2 or better

weapons. However, the potion also has a "bad luck" side effect. For 1d4 days after the potion wears off, the character is -4 on all "to hit" rolls.

Luminescence: This potion is usually found in a slender flask. If the potion is quaffed, the drinker suffers 1d10 points of damage. If, however, part of the potion is poured over an object, such as a torch, its true power is released. The object glows with the equivalent of a *light* spell for 1d6 + 6 turns. The object gives off no heat and can be used under water. There are typically 8 doses per flask.

Lycanthropy: This foul, enchanted mixture contains the blood of a lycanthrope. The character who quaffs the potion will notice no ill effects until the first full moon. At that time he turns into a lycanthrope, as if he had contracted the disease by fighting one. Use the table below to determine the type of lycanthropy.

1	Werewolf
2	Wereboar
3	Werebear
4	Wererat
5	Seawolf
6	Werefox
7	Weretiger
8	Werebadger

Mage Wine: This potion is only usable by wizards and bards. When imbibed, the drinker can immediately recall a spell he cast earlier in the day. The recalled spell must be cast within the next 24 hours.

Magic Blocking: The imbiber of this potion is immune to all magical weapons for 1d4 + 1 turns.

Magic Enhancement: When this potion is swallowed by a spellcaster, his next 1d4 spells have maximum duration, range, effect, and damage. Any non-spellcasters imbibing this potion suffer 1d12 points of damage.

Magic Peas: This unique potion will confuse even the worst glutton. When poured on any surface, the potion creates a plateful of delicious-smelling, sweet peas. However, once someone tries to eat the peas, the peas magically roll away, making them impossible to eat. These effects last for 1d6 turns. However, if the potion is imbibed, the drinker becomes ill for 1d4 hours, as the peas churn about in his stomach. A character effected in this way cannot attack or defend himself.

Magic Resistance: Five doses will be discovered in 95% of the vials found, the other 5% contain seven doses. Each dose lasts 4d4 rounds and confers a 10% magic resistance to the drinker—or adds 10% if he already has a magic resistance. If more than one potion is imbibed, consult the compatibility table in the *Dungeon Master's* guide.

Magic Shielding: When a character drinks this potion, a *minor globe of invulnerability* springs up around him. The duration is 1d8 + 3 rounds.

Magnetism: When this potion is quaffed, the drinker generates a 20-foot field of magnetism. All iron objects of 50 pounds or less are attracted to his body. Sharp and pointed objects have a 50% chance of piercing the imbiber. The duration is 5d4 rounds.

Magnification: This potion's properties are not revealed until it is mixed with a second potion. The imbiber of the combined potions receives the maximum effectiveness and duration of the second potion. For example, mixing a *potion of magnification* with a *potion of magnetism* gives the latter potion a duration of 20 rounds, or mixed with a *potion of extra- healing* would heal 24 points of damage.

Metal Immunity: This thin liquid has a metallic hue and tastes chalky. It grants the character quaffing it immunity to

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metal. Metal weapons pass harmlessly through his body, metal armor falls through his body, and he can pass through metal doors. The effects of the potion last 1d4 + 4 turns.

Midas Touch: Metal turns to gold when touched by a person who consumes this potion. However, gold touched turns to lead, and magical metals and metals weighing more than 10 pounds cannot be altered. The potion's duration is 1d4 turns. Transformed metals revert to their original form after one hour.

Mind Focusing: When this potion is ingested, the drinker's Intelligence and Dexterity is increased by one, to a maximum score of 18, for 1d4 hours.

Mirage: When poured on the ground, this potion creates a mini-environment, about 100 yards in diameter. This environment is essentially a tropical paradise with temperatures ranging from 75 to 80 degrees and a small waterfall cascading into a pool. The paradise lasts for 1d4 + 4 hours. Adventurers and explorers seek these potions, as they provide oases in the desert and warm retreats in arctic climes.

Mirror Eyes: This thick liquid has a silvery hue and is almost always odorless. When consumed, the eyes of the imbiber change to silver, pupil-less orbs. The drinker can see perfectly, but light is reflected off his or her eyes, protecting him from petrification and all other gaze attacks. This potion is prized by adventurers, and has made the reputation of the Basilisk Exterminating Company. The potion's duration is 1d4 + 4 turns.

Monster Creation: When this multi-hued liquid is poured on the ground, four hobgoblins spring to life and begin battling the character holding the now-empty vial. The hobgoblins fight until destroyed or the character is killed. This potion was created for fighters wanting to practice without leaving the comfort of their homes. If the potion is consumed, the imbiber suffers 1d12 points of damage and is incapacitated for 1d8 hours.

Hobgoblins (4): Int Average; AL LE; AC 5 (10); MV 9; HD 1 + 1; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SZ M; ML 12; XP 35.

Nodozze: A typical vial contains four doses. When imbibing this elixir, a character is able to remain awake for 24 hours—no matter how tired he is. However, at the end of that period, the person becomes fatigued and must rest at least eight hours.

Noxious Resistance: This elixir protects the imbiber from all forms of noxious and poisonous odors and gasses. Further, it negates the effects of gas-based attacks, such as green dragon breath, *cloudkill*, or poison gas traps. The duration is 1d4 + 4 turns.

Open Mind: When this potion is quaffed, the surface thoughts of the imbiber are known to any creature within 50 yards. This mental broadcast is stopped by two or more feet of rock, two or more inches of any metal, or a thin sheet of lead foil. This potion can reveal that the imbiber is behind a door, around the next corner, what he is thinking of his fellow party members or that barmaid across the room, etc. The effects of this potion last 5d6 rounds.

Opposite Alignment: The imbiber of this potion immediately assumes the opposite of his alignment for 1d8 + 8 turns. The potion does not affect neutral characters.

Pestilence: Often misidentified as a *potion of healing*, this vile mixture was believed to be brewed by priests of the god of disease. While it heals 4 points of damage to the imbiber, it also causes him to become a "carrier" of a debilitating disease. This is similar to the priest spell *cause disease*. The effected character will infect anyone he touches during the next 1d4 + 1 days. The character himself is immune to the disease. A *cure disease* spell cast upon the potion or drinker will negate the effects of the cursed draught.

Petrification: One sip of this potion causes a character to become petrified, as if he were a statue. Only a *stone to flesh* or *wish* will rescue the imbiber.

Photosynthesis: This elixir, created by an obscure druidic sect, is a deep green liquid that exudes an earthy smell. After a character quaffs this potion, he falls unconscious for 1d4 turns. During this time, a massive transformation takes place. The imbiber's skin turns a deep green and his metabolism is altered. The character no longer has a need for food, existing only on water, and he must now spend at least six hours a day in direct sunlight or suffer the effects of starvation. The transformation is permanent and can only be reversed by a *wish* or *limited wish*.

Physical Enhancement: When this delicious elixir is quaffed, one of the physical attributes of the character is enhanced. Thus, a woman can have a pretty face, or a dwarf can acquire a fine, lengthy beard. Only one attribute can be altered, including color of skin or hair. The duration of the potion is 1d4 weeks.

Power: There are four different varieties of this potion, one for warriors, wizards, priests, and rogues. Each type of potion lasts 1d4 + 4 turns. Characters receive no bonuses if they drink a potion meant for another class.

Warriors: gain +3 to hit, +5 damage, and 20 additional temporary hit points.

Wizards: cast their spells as if they were two levels above their present level.

Priests: gain a +1 to hit, +3 damage, and cast their spells as if they were one level higher.

Rogues: gain a +1 to hit, +2 to damage, and gain 20 percentage points in any one ability.

Pseudo Treant: Upon drinking this liquid, the imbiber's body starts to stretch and change. Within 6 rounds they have taken on the appearance of a tree (AC 0; MV 12; HD 7; hp 42; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8/1-8) The potion's duration is 10d4 turns.

Psionic Ability: This rare and valuable potion has great potential for non-psionic characters, allowing them to gain a randomly determined wild talent. While the duration of the potion is 1d6 months, the imbiber is free to consume other potions after two days. This potion has no effect on psionic characters.

Psychotic Killer: Anyone quaffing this cursed liquid immediately starts attacking anyone within his line of sight for 1d8 + 4 rounds.

Rage: This unusual elixir is identified as a *potion of healing* 80% of the time. It has two effects: the imbiber is instantly healed of 4 points of damage. The second effect remains hidden until the character is threatened, attacked, or angered. When this condition is met, the potion causes the character to become enraged, dropping everything in hand in favor of the most damaging weapon within his grasp. The character attacks the person or creature that angered him, at +2 to hit and damage. The rage continues for 1d10 rounds.

Rainbow Bridge: This rare elixir appears as a swirl of scintillating colors.

The character quaffing this potion must concentrate, forming a mental picture of a bridge. Within eight rounds, a bridge of rainbow colors appears, five feet wide at the base and up to 50 feet long. The bridge is permanent unless more than 5,000 pounds is placed on it at any one time or unless a *dispel magic* is cast on it.

Recall: After drinking this potion, anything the imbibing character reads, hears, or sees during 1d10 turns, can be remembered at any time. This potion is especially sought after by spies and map makers.

Reflection: This extremely rare potion causes the drinker to develop mirror-like skin, clothing, and armor for 1d6 + 3 turns. The mirrored individual reflects the images of creatures, people, and scenery on all sides of him, making him -4 to be hit because of the distorted image.

Rejuvenation: This potion allows a character with psionic abilities to regain PSPs at twice the normal rate per hour for 1d4 hours.

Rest: After drinking this potion, a character is suddenly relieved of all fatigue, receiving the benefits of eight hours of sleep.

Resuscitation: When the cap of this exotic liquid is removed, a highly magical gas is released. If opened under the nose of an unconscious creature or character who has 0 hit points or more, the gas will revive them. Characters or creatures with 0 hit points receive 1 point of healing. The gas will not work on those with a negative score of hit points. The potion also can be used to revive characters who are the victims of *sleep* spells.

Reverse Ventriloquism: A randomly selected person or creature within 50' of someone drinking this potion can make his voice sound as if it were issuing from the imbiber. The selected speaker is instantly aware of this ability and can talk in any language he knows through the imbiber for one turn. To detect the ruse, listeners must roll a successful saving throw versus spells with a penalty of -1.

Revivication: This potent elixir appears no more remarkable than a bottle of water—until a character adds a few drops of his own blood into the mixture. When this happens, the potion foams and turns a brilliant red. If the owner of the *revivication potion* dies within one week of adding his blood to the mixture, the potion can be administered to his body to bring him back to life. The potion is useless one week after it turns red, and it has no effect when administered to someone other than the owner.

Safe Consumption: When this sweet liquid is consumed, the drinker is rendered immune to the harmful effects of any non-magical food and drink for the next 24 hours. Thus, the character is unaffected by ingested poisons and can safely eat rotted food, tainted water, or lousy cooking.

Sanity: This elixir cures any form of insanity, madness, or the effects of mind-altering spells such as *charm, fear,* and *confusion.*

Scent Neutralization: This odorless liquid has the consistency of rubbing alcohol and appears in a variety of pastel colors. It tends to taste like wild game and renders the imbiber odorless for the duration of its effect—1d4 + 4 turns. One in 20 of these potions also allows the character drinking it to control his aroma so he can smell like anything he desires. This latter version is prized by noble women who use it to create individual perfumes.

Scrying: When this potion is poured into calm, clear water, it forms a silvery reflecting pool. This pool acts as a *crystal ball* for 1d6 turns, and is useable only by wizards. Many wizards favor these potions as portable *crystal balls.*

Sensory Enhancement: While drinking this potion, a character must concentrate on one of the five senses. The one selected becomes enhanced. For 1d12 hours, the potion's effects imitate the animal that best fits the chosen sense. For example, a character will acquire the eyes of an eagle, the nose of a bloodhound, etc.

Shadow: This ink black substance, when swallowed, causes the imbiber's body and possessions to become a shadow of himself. The character will remain on the ground or against a wall, like a normal shadow, until a person or creature walks across his path. In this instance, he becomes the shadow of that person or creature. The shadow merely moves with the person or creature and cannot attack or take physical actions during the potion's duration—2d12 turns. When the potion wears off, the character appears next to the person or creature he was "attached" to. This potion is often sought after by assassins and spies.

Sharp Eyes: The character drinking this potion is able to see in darkness as easily as he sees in daylight. This does not include magical darkness. Under normally-lighted conditions, the drinker gains +2 to his chance to spot secret doors and automatically spots any creatures hiding in shadows. The duration is 1d4 + 4 turns.

Singing: When swallowed, this odorless, colorless draught produces a warm, tingly sensation that allows the imbiber to sing in a melodious, resonant voice for 1d4 hours. The character gains a singing proficiency of 18. If the character already possessed the proficiency, it raises to 20.

Sleep Bestowing: These drafts are usually brown in color and come in black flasks. Once a character imbibes the potion, for 1d8 + 1 rounds he can make any intelligent creature fall asleep for 2-3 hours just by speaking. The listeners grow so bored from his speech, they fall asleep. The drinker cannot control who falls asleep. This elixir was first created for inserting into a king's wine, as the court wizard wanted the king to bore his subjects to sleep. However, the king never tried the potion, as his wine-taster put everyone in the royal chambers into a deep slumber.

Sleepy Breath: The breath of the person imbibing this potion will put to sleep any air-breathing creature of up to 6 hit dice. The imbiber's breath is in a cone, 4 inches wide at his mouth, 12 feet long, and 6 feet wide at the base. The duration of the potion is a single breath.

Snake Crawling: This potion turns a character, and everything worn or carried, into a snake-like humanoid with diminutive arms and legs. The imbiber is able to crawl at a movement rate of 12. The duration of the potion is 1d4 hours.

Sobriety: The consumer of this potion becomes instantly sober, no matter how intoxicated he was.

Soul-Chilling: This foul fluid is an invention of kobold shaman. It always appears as a cobalt blue liquid in a thimble-sized vial. Each vial can affect 100 gallons. The potion is normally used by pouring it into a barrel of water or ale. Those who drink the mixture witness their skin turn a pale blue and ice forming on their bodies. Further, they are subject to requests as if a *suggestion*

spell had been cast on them. The effects of this potion last 1d6 turns.

Spelljamming: This rare and valuable potion allows any warrior or rogue to operate a helm as if he were a spelljammer of equivalent level. In addition, any wizard or priest who imbibes this potion doubles his ability at spelljamming. The duration of this potion is 1d4 days.

Stone Form: A character drinking this magical mixture turns into a living stone statue. This grants the character an AC of 0, a saving throw bonus of +3, and a Dexterity loss of 3 for the potion's duration—1d4+4 rounds. A character's "to hit" and damage rolls are not changed.

Sunlight Resistance: This elixir is a boon to drow who choose to leave their Underdark homeworld. Upon consuming a draught of this potion, a drow can exist under bright sunlight without suffering any visual problems. Most flasks contain the equivalent of three potions—each potion having a duration of 1d10 days. The potions have no effect on other races.

Superior Healing: This prized healing potion cures 6d8+2 hit points of damage. If the potion is consumed in thirds, each third cures 2d8 hit points.

Sustenance: This thick liquid appears to be an appealing color, such as ruby red or emerald green. It smells like fresh baked bread or a broiling steak. If drunk, the imbiber recalls the taste of his favorite food, and has no need for food for the next seven days. The potion does not negate the need for water.

Teleportation: This potion typically comes sealed in a metal flask. It takes two turns to consume the entire contents, after which the imbiber is *teleported* to the first place he visualizes—provided it is within 100 miles of his current location.

Thinness: Most *potions of thinness* are found in four-dose flasks. When consumed, the drinker's trunk size is reduced from normal proportions to paper-thinness. This permits the character to pass through cracks or flatten against a wall to hide. The potion also reduces the character's weight to that of parchment, jeopardizing him if the potion is consumed in strong winds. The effects of the potion last 1d4 turns.

Toad Skin: A character drinking this potion immediately gains hundreds of wart-like nodules all over his skin. The warts, which last for 1d6+6 rounds, exude a caustic fluid which does not harm the imbiber, but burns other characters and creatures. When a *toad skin* character successfully makes a bare-handed attack against another character, the victim suffers 1d4 points of damage and begins gagging and writhing from the burning sensation for the next four rounds. Undead are immune to *toad skin* attacks.

Tongues: There are five varieties of this potion, each usable by any character class. Each *tongues* potion provides magical linguistic abilities to the character who swallowed it for 1d4+4 turns.

Roll	Potion
01-30	Tongues
31-60	Speak With Animals
61-80	Speak With Dead
81-90	Speak With Monsters
91-00	Speak With Plants

Tragic Heroism: This elixir works as a *potion of super heroism*, with the following additional effect: all monsters within 20' of the character quaffing the potion stop whatever they are doing and attack the character. These monsters fight until they are slain or the character dies. To paladins and other heroic figures, this potion has considerable appeal.

Truth: Developed by an enterprising wizard interested in investigating criminal activities, this potion is intended to be consumed by someone who is to be questioned. One round after being swallowed, the potion puts the character into a trance for 1d4 turns. The character will freely and literally answer any questions asked during this trance, provided the questions are posed in a language the character can understand.

Ugliness: Drinking this elixir causes the loss of all but 1d4 points of Charisma for 3d12 hours. The character *polymorphs* into a creature resembling a large, slimy humanoid toad. The humanoid, complete with warts and a repulsive odor, is capable of normal activities.

Undead: Drinking this potion *polymorphs* a character to look and smell like a zombie for 1d4+1 hours. The character cannot be turned and retains all of his original statistics and armor class. There is an 80% chance other undead will believe the character is a true zombie.

Underground Awareness: The imbiber of this potion gains abilities to help him in underground travels. These potions vary widely in the abilities conferred. And a typical potion, which grants 1d4 abilities, lasts for 1d4+4 hours.

Roll	Skill Conferred
1-4	detect new tunnels/passages
5-8	detect grade or slope
9-11	determine direction of travel
12-14	determine depth underground
15-16	detect shifting walls/rooms
17-18	detect unsafe constructions
19-20	detect stonework traps/pits

Useful Appendages: When this potion is quaffed, the character forms one or more appendages; the formation takes 2 rounds. The appendages vanish after 1d4+4 turns or after suffering 5 points of damage each. Consult the following table to determine the appendages grown.

1. Tail	Dam: 1-8
2. Two arms	Dam: 1-2 each
3. Two crab claws	Dam: 1-4 each, crush for 1-10
4. Four tentacles	Dam: 1-6 each

Vampirism: An odd, necromantic brew, this potion causes any character imbibing it to undergo a frightening metamorphosis. The change takes one round to complete and is very painful. And the end of the transformation, the character gains the appearance and many of the abilities of a vampire. The character can *spider climb* and turn to *gaseous form* at will *regenerate* three points of damage per round. The character is not restricted to darkness, does not gain any attack bonuses, *charm* ability or other benefits, nor can he drain others' levels. The duration of the potion is 1d10+10 turns.

Venom: When a character imbibes this potion he grows sharp fangs dripping venom. Anyone bitten by this character takes 1d4 points of damage and must save versus poison or die in 1d8 rounds. The imbiber is immune to the venom. The effects of the potion last for 5d4 rounds.

Visions: This is a cursed version of the *potion of forewarning*, and 90% of the time it is identified as that beneficial potion. For 1 turn, the imbiber enters a trance and "sees" the future. Only in this case, the imbiber is deceived; the visions

are not true and always depict the imbiber suffering misfortune.

Vulnerability: This potion increases the imbiber's sensitivity to pain and damage. Any damage sustained by the individual for the three turns the potion is active is doubled. In addition, the imbiber's Armor Class is worsened by 2, and he suffers a -3 penalty on all saving throws. A single sip is all that is needed to confer these penalties.

Water of Obscurement: When found, this liquid appears to be cloudy water. If imbibed, it has no effect. Its power comes from being poured from a height of three or more feet. In this case, it creates a 30-foot radius cloud that limits vision to one foot, negates scents, and dampens sound. Fighting within the cloud is at -4. The cloud lasts 1d4 turns.

Weakness: When this elixir is swallowed, the imbiber's Strength score is reduced to 5. This unfortunate individual suffers all the associated penalties for a lesser strength for the duration of the potion—1d12 + 4 turns.

Wizardry: This potion, which has a duration of 1d4 + 4 turns, only benefits wizards, giving them a temporary increase of three levels of experience. This improves their hit dice, "to hit" ability, and saving throws. In addition, it allows them to cast their spells as if they were three levels higher. It does not grant them additional spells.

Worm Calling: This potion causes the drinker to become irresistible to all crawling insects, animals, and monsters, such as snakes, worms, carrion crawlers, and caterpillars. The location of the character will determine the type of creatures he attracts. Each potion lasts 1d12 turns, and 15 creatures are attracted to the drinker per turn.

Zorbo Fingers: This potent elixir is always found in single dose containers. When quaffed, the imbiber is granted a zorbo's ability to gain the Armor Class of whatever he touches for 20 rounds. The character could gain an AC 7 from earth, AC 5 from wood; AC 3 from metal; or AC 0 from stone, etc.

A Barrel Of Oils

Oil of Animation: Normally discovered in small bottles of crystal or stone, this rare oil is prized because it can animate living or dead vegetable matter. A single vial will cover two cubic feet of surface area. When applied, the object becomes subservient to the user's commands—provided those commands consist of five words or less. If the object has legs, it can walk; arms, it can fight or grasp. Harps and lutes can play themselves, etc. The duration is 1d6 + 6 turns.

Oil of Armor: This oil gives a temporary Armor Class bonus of +4 to creatures not wearing armor. A vial typically contains enough oil to cover four man-sized creatures, one dose lasting 1d6 hours.

Oil of Buoyancy: Coating a person or object with this oil prevents it from sinking in water for 1d4 + 4 hours. There is enough oil per vial to coat one man-sized creature—about 25 square feet.

Oil of Dexterity: An individual who coats himself with this substance increases his Dexterity to 19 for 1d4 + 4 turns. Further, thieves who use this oil increase their pick pockets and open locks scores by 30 percentage points each.

Oil of the Dryad: When a character anoints himself with this pale green oil, he is able to pass through vegetation like a druid and enter trees as per a *plant door* spell. Once applied, the oil remains magical for 1d4 + 4 turns.

Oil of Elasticity: A character who pours this oil over his body transforms into a humanoid gelatin-like mass. In this form, the character can stretch his appendages to immense lengths and minute thinness. For example, one limb could be stretched to 300 percent of its normal length. Once applied, the oil remains magical for 1d4 + 4 turns.

Oil of the Feasts: When poured into a pot, kettle, or other cooking device, this oil becomes very hot. Any food item placed in the oil cooks until it is done, then floats to the top. The oil is valued by adventurers who do not want to announce their presence by building a cooking fire. A flask typically contains enough oil to cook 10 one-person meals.

Oil of Hair Replacement: This magical oil was developed by a self-conscious wizard who was worried about his hair loss. Two hours after the oil is rubbed into the scalp, hair begins to grow at a rate of one-quarter inch a day for 10 days. The hair is always bright orange. Care must be taken when handling this potion; if it is spilled on hands, arms, or other flesh, hair will grow there at the same rate. The hair growth is permanent and only can be banished by a *remove curse* or a razor.

Oil of Immovability: This highly magical mixture keeps things from moving. When this thick, honey-smelling oil is applied to the hinges of a door, the legs of a chair, or other moveable objects, it locks them into place and against the object they were sitting upon or against for 1d4 + 4 hours. Only a *dispel magic* will neutralize the oil earlier. A door could still be opened, a chair picked up, etc., if the item was broken. The hinges would still remain affixed to the wall, the chair legs to the floor. Each application covers 1 square foot of surface area, and there are typically 2d12 applications per flask.

Oil of Lighting: This oil is stored in a dark container. When it is unstoppered, the magic is released, and the oil glows like a beacon or *light* spell for 6d6 turns. The oil can be poured onto objects, setting them glowing. The oil does not work under water.

Oil of Lightning Bolts: Characters who spread this oil on their bodies attract lightning bolts for 1d4 hours. If there is calm weather, clouds quickly gather, heavy rains begin, and lightning fills the sky—and strikes the character. Each hour 1d12 lightning bolts will automatically strike the character, doing 2d10 points of damage. This oil is treasured by farmers who pour it on the ground near their fields so their crops will be watered.

Oil of Lorn: Sir Lorn, a famed paladin, commissioned a special oil to be created for him. Lorn was always concerned about his appearance and presence, and the oil named after him is a magical men's cologne. It makes the wearer smell so good that his Charisma is raised by 1 for 1d6 hours. A vial typically contains enough cologne for 10 applications. Women using the cologne gain no benefit.

Oil of Metal Fatigue: This oil is usually stored in a glass flask, with four applications per flask. When the oil comes in contact with metal, the mixture causes the metal to rust and fall to bits within 1d4 rounds. Magical metal receives a saving throw vs. disintegration. Oil thrown at iron golems and other metal-based creatures causes 2d10 points of damage. One application covers a 2′ square by 2″ deep metal surface.

Oil of Phosphorus: This potent oil

comes in a leather flask with a small hole in the stopper. By squeezing the flask, the oil is forced out through the hole. The oil sets fire to anything combustible it is squirted upon—except leather. If squirted on a character's clothing, the resultant fire causes 1d6 points of damage per round until it is extinguished. Uses include starting fires, igniting arrows, lighting a torch, etc. A typical flask includes enough oil for 20 squirts.

Oil of Preservation: Drow who travel above ground find this oil valuable because it prevents drow armor and weapons from losing their magic in sunlight. One vial contains enough oil to coat a drow suit of armor, or a cloak, set of clothing, or 3-7 weapons depending on their size. One application will preserve an item for six months above the tunnels of the Underdark.

Oil of Rust Proofing: This oil protects metal from water, oxidation, rust monsters, and *Oil of Metal Fatigue* attacks. One flask contains enough oil to cover a suit of armor, one large shield, and two weapons. Once applied, the oil remains magical for 1d12+12 hours.

Oil of Scents: When the vial is uncorked, this oil, created as a practical joke, smells like the finest perfume. However, when a character applies the oil, he takes on the stench of skunk spray. The smell remains for 1d8 hours. It can be removed earlier with a *dispel magic* or by bathing many, many times.

Oil of Scribes: When applied to written text, this mystical oil acts as a *comprehend languages* spell, translating the written word into a language the user can understand. On magical writings it simulates a *read magic* spell. The oil also reveals invisible *wizard mark* script, *secret page* writings, and *illusionary script.* One vial of *oil of scribes* contains enough fluid for 10 sheets of parchment.

Oil of Scrying: Also known as Mage's Vision, this syrupy oil has no use unless poured into a bowl. By swirling the liquid and concentrating on a place or individual, the user can use the bowl as a *crystal ball* for 1d4+6 turns. The individual or place must be well known. And an individual of any class can use the oil.

Oil of Unlocking: This oil is usually found in a tiny, stoppered vial. The stopper is a dropper for inserting measured doses into locks. One dropper of oil will open a normally-locked door or chest. There is only a 30% chance the oil will open a magic lock. The oil is not effective against magically-held doors. One vial usually contains 8 doses. ❑

Plentiful Potions by:

Zachary Drake: Vampirism; **Steve Johnson:** Oil of Lorn; **David Ward:** Oil of Lighting, Oil of Metal Fatigue, Oil of Phosphorus, Oil of Scrying, Teleportation, Magic Enhancement; **Gorin Topic:** Gray Slumber; **Kevin Troy:** Inner Strength, Contact Disruption, Advanced Meditation, Magic Shielding, Archmagedom, Wizardry, Magnification, Insulation, Infravision, Rejuvenation; **Christopher Butler:** Dragon Armor; **Shawn G. Merwin:** Resuscitation; **Clinton Labombard:** Mind Focusing, Anti-Magic Potion, Creation, Scrying, the Rainbow Bridge, Good Humor; **Travis Powell:** Permanent Disenchantment, Enchantment; **Will Reeves:** Elixir of Zorbo Fingers, Elixir of Absorption, Undead; **Laura D. Craig:** Noxious Resistance; **Eric and Terrence Kemper:** Thinness, Snake Crawling, Iron-Handedness, Flask of Forgetfulness, Worm-Calling, Ugliness, Greensprouting, Language-Learning, Bouncing, Intelligence, Reflection; **Robert Morris Jr.:** Superior Healing; **Stephen Kenson:** Pestilence; **Julius Wu:** Golden Silence, Magnetism, Useful Appendages; **Gerald T. Ziehm:** Recall, Sensory Enhancement, Rest; **Tim Royappa:** Revivification, Tragic Heroism; **Eric Moon:** Psionic Ability; **Michael Fortner:** Spelljamming; **Karen Brady:** Elixir of Nodozze, Psuedo-Treant, Kindness; **Carl Myer:** Rage; **Douglas M. Burck:** Oil of Armor, Soul Chilling, Philter of Fluidness, Elixir of Luck; **Todd Pote:** Oil of Animation; **Keith Radloff:** Oil of Elasticity, Oil of Magic Blocking, Lycanthropy, Magic Resistance, Elixir of Midas Touch; **Anthony Herring:** Dark Draft of the Voodoo Master; **Nick Kessler:** Clay; **Lyle Wiedeman:** Oil of Unlocking, Protection from Immiscibility, Oil of Buoyancy, Fresh Air, Luminescence, Underground Awareness, Toad Skin, Stone Form; **Katherine York:** Oil of Immovability, Heroic Action; **Dan Vernon:** Ghostliness; **Rob Nicholls:** Oil of Dexterity, Weakness, Blindness, Elixir of Sanity, Aging, Clarity, Cold Resistance, Fright, Deafness, Digging, Fire Vulnerability, Foul Water, Lethargy, Open Mind, Reverse Ventriloquism, Vulnerability; **Robert McKittrick:** Oil of Scents; **Itamar Netzer:** Oil of Lightning Bolts, All-Purpose Elixir of Healing, Sleep Bestowing, Craftsmanship; **Doug Smith:** Oil of Rust Proofing, Liquid of Monster Creation, Sustenance, Water of Obscurement, Fur Growth, Scent Neutralization, Mirror Eyes, Metal Immunity; **Doug Haile:** Draught of Visions, Draught of Forewarning; **David Baker:** Oil of Hair Replacement, Oil of Preservation, Sunlight Resistance, Photosynthesis, Truth, Digestion, Bubbles, Singing; **Steve Johnson:** Oil of the Feast, Dwarfswater; **Joseph G. Wichmann:** Danger Detection, Sobriety; **Theron Martin:** Enhancement, Safe Consumption, Drunkenness; **Gary Watkins:** Oil of the Dryad, Oil of Scribes, Venom, Tongues, Sharp Eyes, Mage Wine, Sleepy Breath; **Jason Behret:** Life Stealing, Life Suspension, Alternate Profession; **Chas Jensen:** Lethargy, Kanzaz, Immunity, Horn of Plenty Potion, Gluttony, Genius Potion, Clean and Dry Potion, Childishness, Psychotic Killer Potion, Opposite Alignment, Mirage Potion, Magic Peas Potion; **Sean Gollschewsky:** Essence Transference, Confusion, Power, Dragon Breath; **Jason Pervier:** Wizardry, Eternal Slumber, Shadow Potion, Petrification, Chameleon Power, Cold Resistance ❑

Ponderously Puzzling

Potion Plethora Predicament

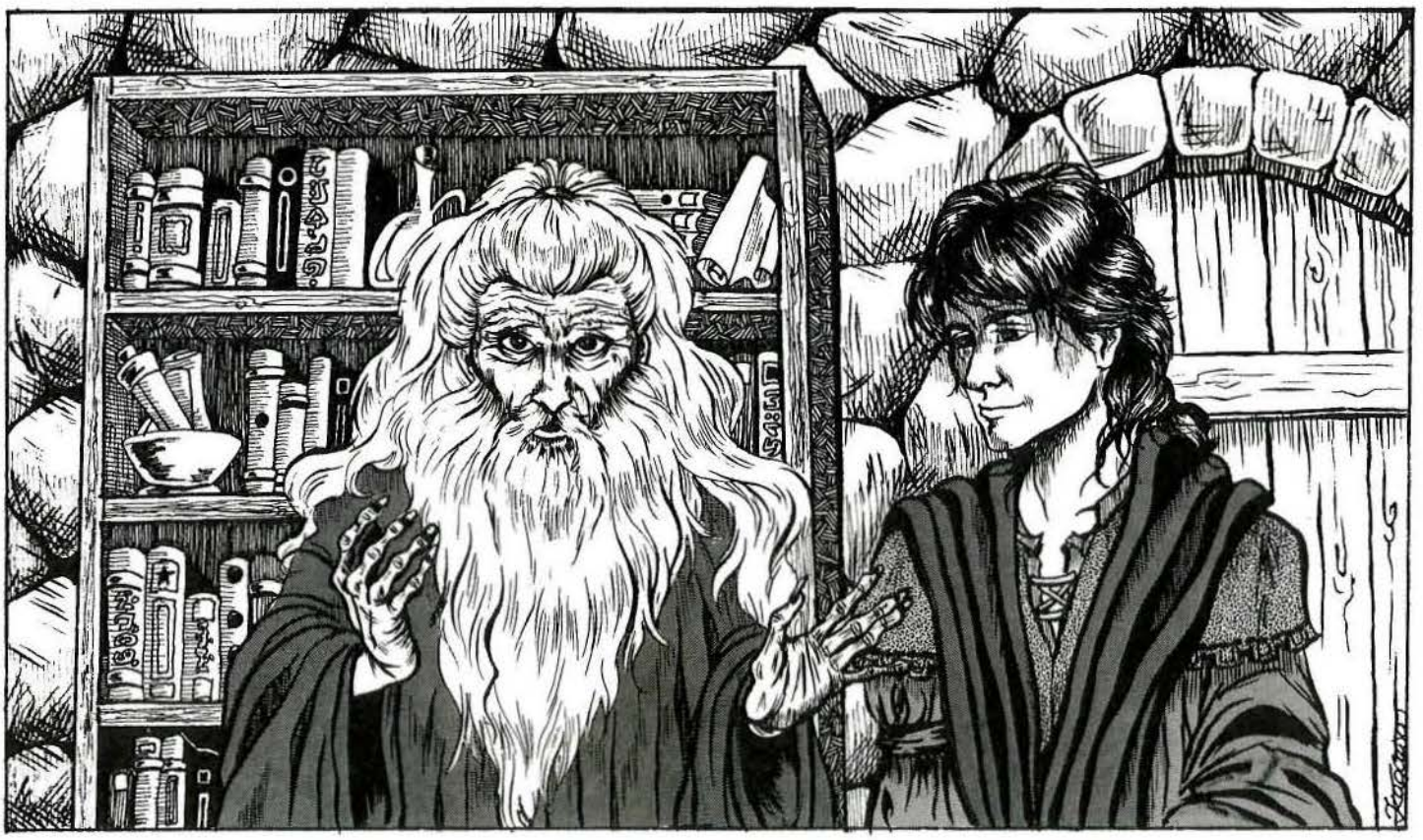
by Rob Nicholls

Ambasador Carrague, an aged, but powerful wizard, is Ravens Bluff's honorary building inspector—and noted sage. Because of his past career as a foreign diplomat and a successful adventurer, people in The Living City often seek his advice.

However, sometimes that advice is faulty. Time has begun to take its toll upon the Ambassador. While his increasing senility gives him a certain amount of mystique, it has rendered most of his words of wisdom useless or impractical. In hopes of restoring him to his former mental state, Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane has given the Ambassador a rare and treasured *potion of longevity.*

Unfortunately, the eccentric Carrague placed this potion in a row with four others. Now he cannot tell which potion is which. Not wishing to waste valuable magic by identifying or drinking each potion, the Ambassador has asked you to help him. He tells you the following:

"Well, let me think. Each potion has a different smell, yes? Right, which means the red potion has no scent. Consequently, the blue potion, which is first, is next to the one in the squat flask. Of course, each is of a different color, but the potion with the foul smell is next to the one in the glass flask. Hmmm? Oh yes, each is in a flask of a different material and shape. Now, I think the fresh smelling liquid is a *potion of climbing,* and the sweet smelling potion is next to the one in the metal flask. What? Yes, yes, each potion has a different effect. If they were all the same, I wouldn't be in this fix, yes? However, the orange potion is in the middle flask, which means the first potion allows one to fly. Then, if pigs could fly, and since dragons can, the foul smelling potion is in the slender flask. This indicates that the bitter smelling potion is in the crystal flask. Now, if you take into account that the square flask is just to the left of the round one and that the *potion of healing* is in the oblong flask of wood, then the green liquid is a *potion of giant strength.* Once this has been divided by four and taken to the tenth power, you will notice that the ceramic flask holds purple liquid and the blue liquid is in the slender flask, right? So, which one is the *potion of longevity?"* ❑



The Living Galaxy

A Thrill In Every Port

by Roger E. Moore

When I arrived at Frankfort airport, preparing to leave West Germany and the United States Army a decade ago, I was impressed by the armored fighting vehicle sitting by an airport entrance and by the number of police officers carrying submachine guns through the terminal lobby. All of my luggage was searched before I boarded my plane. I walked through a metal detector and was electronically swept by handheld devices. My fellow passengers and I took it in stride. If that was what it took to have a safe flight, they could check my teeth, too. Radical terrorist groups operated in the Frankfort-Mannheim-Heidelberg area where I was stationed. Tales of unprovoked gun battles, rocket attacks, road mines, and car bombings were known to everyone.

Looking back on it now, it dawns on me that this experience would be great to use in a science-fiction role-playing game campaign. All I'd have to do is change the locale to another planet, create a similar environment of global tension and paranoia, and the player characters might be in for a memorable planetfall indeed.

A lot of people who play SF role-playing games also read SF novels and short stories. I would guess that game masters for those games borrow many of their ideas for settings and adventures from those same tales, and that's all well and good. But borrowing ideas strictly from stories has a bad side, too, in that you will limit the full range of your imagination. If your campaign is drawn straight from the *Star Trek, Star Wars,* and *Alien* movies, you're missing something.

Borrowing ideas from non-science fiction sources (or even stealing those ideas outright) is an excellent way to keep your campaign lively, fresh, unpredictable, and exciting. Put down this Newszine and look around you, right now. There are at least three concepts right in front of you that you could use in some way in your campaign, and these might be things you've never thought of before. If I now stop writing this and look up from my computer, I can see a poster for Ray Bradbury's book, *The Halloween Tree;* a black radio on top of a file cabinet; and a crock pot in a box on a chair. How can I use these in a campaign?

Think creatively. Look at each object or event and let your mind wander. Pick up on other things you associate with that concept, and try to connect these associations with your campaign. For example, the Ray Bradbury poster has a skull face on it. If I use some free association, I think about the medieval fixation with death that came from the Black Death, the plague that destroyed a third of all humanity in Europe and Asia. I recall hearing that, for years afterward, Death appeared in many artworks, tales, poems, and plays of the time. What if there was a planet that had recently lost more than half its population to a terrible disease or disaster, and the culture there had developed a peculiar fascination with Death? How would the player characters react if they landed on this world and began encountering morbid and frightening clues that something terrible had occurred here—clues such as an inability of many people to talk about the disaster, statues of shroud-wrapped skeletal figures to which people toss coins before hurrying away, and the peculiar idea that everyone who survived the calamity was still doomed to suffer greater horrors to come?

By picking on a random object and using free association, I've created a world crossed with horror, a new and bizarre society that I can develop to give my players a real fright, the sort of scare they'd normally associate with Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* game. All this from looking at a poster and daydreaming.

What can I do with the radio and crock pot? I can think about radio frequencies, wonder what sorts of things a communications operator would hear on his equipment on a starship, and then develop a random-roll table of normal and abnormal communications signals the comm officer might detect. Much of this could be used as "realistic" dressing for an adventure—minor events that contribute to the sense that there is a big universe out there full of things other than the player characters. Some messages the comm officer can receive might lead directly to an adventure: a call for help from a disabled spacecraft, a tell-tale signal that a homing missile has locked onto the characters' starship, or a garbled message from a secret relay satellite that gives the characters a hint that some big event is up.

And the crock pot makes me think of food. So the player characters (after I think about the chili-making contest I used the crock pot for last year) stop over at a space station and are invited to judge a cooking contest of some sort. Lots of humorous and exciting events follow as the contest dissolves into a wild free-for-all, as rival families aboard the station accuse each other of cheating. Now I recall an episode of the TV western *Bonanza* (you do remember *Bonanza,* right?) in which Hoss Cartwright took part in a pancake-eating contest and didn't stop even when a gun battle went on around him. I laughed and laughed when I saw it. Can a similarly absurd situation be developed for an SF campaign?

Ideas come from everywhere. They parade before you every minute of the day. If you are seriously looking for new material to brighten up your campaign, then carry a small notebook and pen with you wherever you go (I do this to get ideas for this column). When an idea strikes you, write it down. You might be astonished at how much material you are creating just by paying attention to the infinite.

You can also steal ideas from non-SF books, stories, movies, and the like. Pay particular attention to books with rich fields of ideas, like books that review large numbers of movies (bazillions of plot and character ideas here!), books that review whole non-SF genres of literature (like Stephen King's *Danse Macabre,* a study of horror in movies, stories, and daily life), and eclectic sources such as books of trivia, lists, and historical events.

For personal touches, some of the best books to read are oral histories of important events, personalized travelogues, and similar first-person

accounts. Nothing beats the impact of an eyewitness's words. You'll find more riches for your GM's descriptions in a single such book than you'd ever imagine in a week of daydreaming. Real-world people, places, and events come to life, all ready for the planting in your own universe. Ernie Pyle's classic saga of World War II, *Here Is Your War,* and Alexander Exquemelin's personal account of Caribbean piracy, *The Buccaneers of America,* could give you the earthy reality you need to describe a particular setting on a world on which the characters have just touched down.

And now, a host of examples showing what you can create by using anything that comes along and turning it into, say, a starport setting or starport-based adventure for your game. (Jean Rabe had asked me for a column on starports, so here it is.) Each example has the source of the idea and the result of my wondering how it could be dropped into an SF game. You might take the very same source and develop a completely different result for putting it in your own game. And if you do, you've got the idea down perfectly.

Note, too, that there's nothing to prevent you from combining two or more of these ideas into a single adventure. Use whatever works best for you, and mix them up in any way you like.

Shop Till You Drop

Source: One of the editors on our magazine staff has talked about taking her family to a gigantic shopping mall in western Canada, a mall so huge that you need hotel reservations before you can make a stab at exploring it. Most airports I've visited seem full of gift shops, and the two ideas merged to produce the following.

Result: Starports belonging to capitalistic industrial nations probably also include or link up to huge shopping centers. Big starports might have unbelievable numbers of stores on the starport grounds. Thousands of retail outlets, department stores, kiosks, boutiques, groceries, service centers, restaurants, pushcart stands, and what have you might be found within a few minutes' travel time by walkway, elevator, escalator, cab, railway, etc. Visitors from less developed planets might break down in tears or become catatonic from overexposure to this richness of choice (as happens in the movie *Moscow on the Hudson).* On lots of worlds, everyday citizens probably visit the starport just to shop and watch the starships come and go. Many stores could buy their goods directly from incoming starships or from interstellar shipping firms. A busy starport is a major tourist and commercial center; no business could pass up the opportunity to do business with one.

Starjacking

Source: The radio recently had a news report about a skyjacking attempt. I remembered the PLO skyjackings of the 1970s and wondered what it would be like to have this happen at a starport.

Result: At a starport with lax security systems on a world known to have terrorist violence, the characters' starship is commandeered by terrorists disguised as armed ground crews or passengers. The terrorists have lots of guns and one or more bombs with them, and they plan to hold the starship and its crew and passengers hostage until the local government pays them a huge sum of money or releases certain political prisoners. If the terrorists succeed in gaining control of the ship, they might also demand that they be flown to another planet, where they will attempt to escape or seek asylum. Assaults on the ship by counterterrorist forces might occur. The characters' ship and faces (and their every word) are likely to be shown on worldwide media coverage. Once the hijacking is over, the characters might be pestered for interviews until they leave the world.

You Can't Get Good Help

Source: Recent news coverage of the Soviet Union has focused on the poor quality of services provided by some hotel staffs in Moscow. I've heard similar comments about the quality of state-run services throughout the U.S.S.R., and I began to wonder what it would be like to have a starport in a deteriorating, state-run nation where blind job security and a collapsing economy have made many people both bitterly cynical and poorly motivated. I was also helped by P. J. O'Rourke's oddball travelogue, *Holidays In Hell,* which has a section describing the bleak atmosphere of Warsaw, Poland, in May 1986.

Result: The characters land at a large starport set in a massive bureaucratic nation with a repressive, state-controlled economy. Almost at once, the characters run into delays in processing paperwork, offloading cargo, and gaining fuel and supplies. Starport workers appear listless and uninterested in the characters' problems; some workers appear to be drinking intoxicants on duty, leading to some accidents and additional delays. Military and police forces are highly visible. Bribes must be paid by the characters if they want to get anything accomplished, and the local black market is a better source of supplies than the starport—though prices are incredibly high and quality is only fair.

Unquiet Sun

Source: I read some articles about the effects of solar flares on worldwide radio communication. An astronomy book I have also discusses red-dwarf flare stars, which seem to erupt at irregular intervals.

Result: As the characters enter a system with an M-type red-dwarf star, they find that the sun has begun giving off huge flares. Electromagnetic communication with the starport to which they are heading is badly interrupted and full of static. The lack of starport communications causes problems during the approach and landing phases of the flight. Because of this, the starport is unable to warn the characters about another serious local problem, the nature of which can be devised by the GM.

Johnnie Comes Marching Home

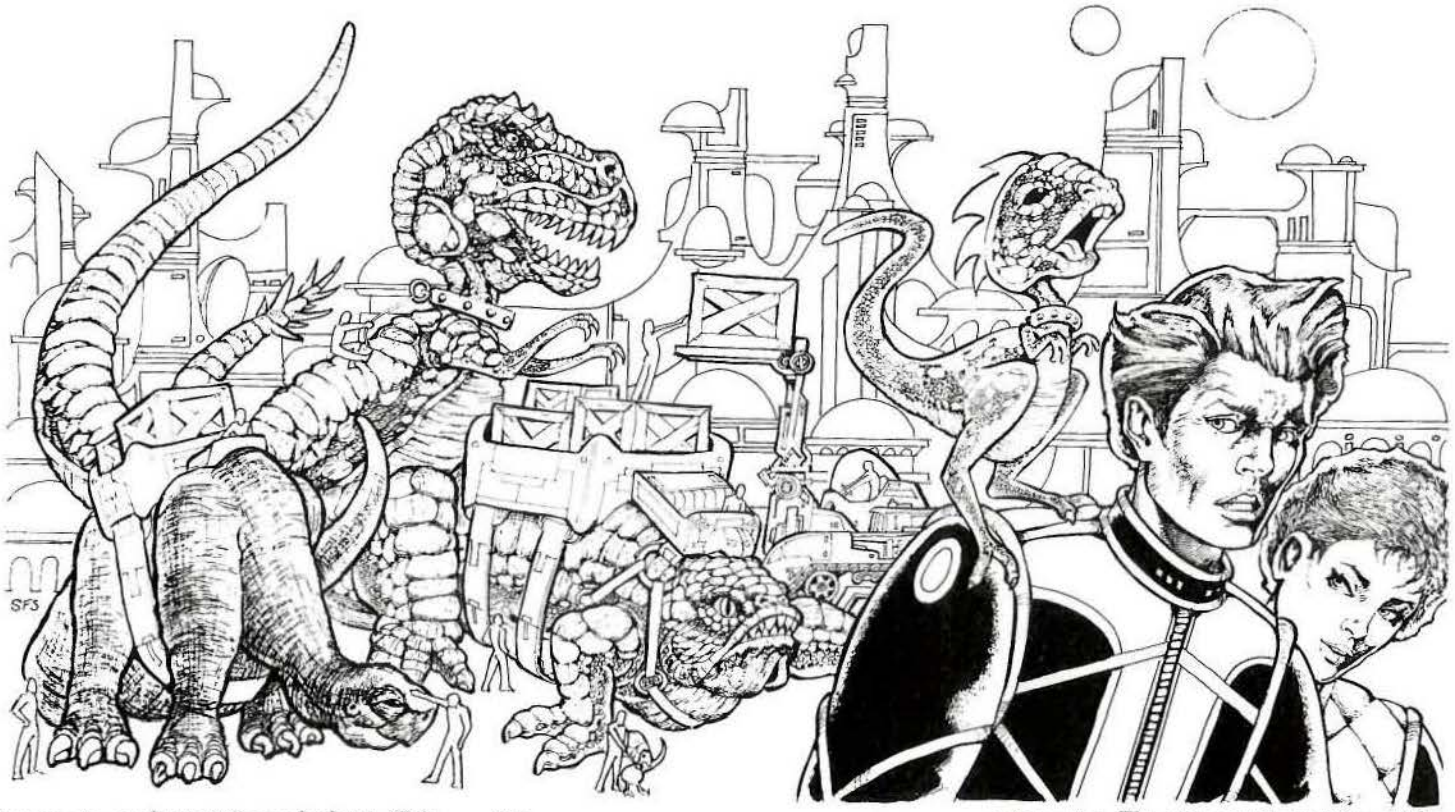
Source: As I write this, U.S. soldiers are returning from the Persian Gulf war.

Result: The characters land at a busy military starport just as huge numbers of troops are returning from a military campaign from another world or in deep space. If the war was both successful and popular, the starport might be jammed with screaming, cheering families and friends who greet the soldiers in an emotional reunion. If the war was both a defeat and very unpopular, the soldiers might be greeted by a jeering, angry mob; riot police could be present as well.

Something Old, Something New

Source: I was chasing my son through the Central American exhibit at the Milwaukee Public Museum when I noticed some models of Mayan pyramids. I remembered, too, a report from the Persian Gulf war that from the ruins of Ur you could see a modern airport.

Result: The starport on one world was built near a huge series of ancient ruins of nonhuman origin. The ruins have been thoroughly explored, and regular



tours are conducted through them. This doesn't mean that the PCs won't find something in the ruins.

Ye Olde Starporte

Source: Years ago, I visited Stratford-on-Avon, the English town where William Shakespeare was born. Despite the very commercial atmosphere there, it was still possible to envision a bit of what England looked like hundreds of years ago—but you had to work at it.

Result: On several worlds having so-called primitive cultures, the presence of starports and the influx of high-tech cultures would produce interesting mixtures of old and new. Imagine the appearance of a starport on New Columbia, described in this column in issue 52: a flat paved field near a large castle, with a walled city close by. Fuel-storage tanks and equipment sheds mingle with tents and primitive huts on the edges of the field. Bizarre souvenir stands and merchant shops can be found everywhere, staffed by people hoping to sell gullible starship crews lots of cheap local artifacts for incredible prices. What clever rogues will the characters meet on this unusual world?

Technical Difficulties

Source: Earlier this year, the news carried a report about a fuel-tank explosion and fire at a Denver airport. Reports about the oil fires in Kuwait after the Persian Gulf war come to mind, too.

Result: The characters are given clearance to land at a well-equipped starport, but are warned about a huge fire at a fuel depot nearby. The pilot can see the enormous column of smoke pouring into the atmosphere from the fire as he approaches for a landing; the disaster is far larger than ground control had let on. Either through sabotage, accident, or natural causes, a monstrous series of fuel tanks exploded in an industrial park the day before the ship arrived. Firefighting crews have not even begun to combat the blaze. The sky is black and foul, and breathing the air without a filter mask causes coughing, shortness of breath, and even illness. Visibility is very poor. Ash and smoke drift across the landing zone, leading to numerous problems in unloading and maintaining the ship. The PCs might be called in to assist in putting out the fire or otherwise help with the situation.

The Reptile Masters

Source: My five-year-old son loves dinosaurs, any kind of dinosaurs. I also read Jack Vance's *The Dragon Masters,* but I'm not supposed to pick things from the SF genre for this column, so I'll stick to noticing my son's plastic-dinosaur collection.

Result: On a world with an indigenous population of large reptilian beasts, the colonists have tamed and bred the wildlife to produce a thousand domestic subspecies. The starport is overrun with pet lizards and "reptiles of burden." The locals are proud of their genetic-engineering and breeding talents, regarding the results as "humanity's best friends." Perhaps the PCs will want a pet, too, or will get to ride a lizard on a nature trail—or will be attacked by a naughty pet that got loose in the cargo-loading docks.

This result can be easily applied to any number of terrestrial and alien species, from spiderlike herbivores to fishlike cattle. Wherever people and other brainy aliens go, they'll have a profound effect on the flora and fauna.

An Unwelcome Welcome

Source: Chicago's O'Hare airport has often been the scene of protests by local residents who dislike the excessive noise the jets make. I recall that the American space shuttles create sonic booms when they land, too, and I imagine that any aerodynamic spacecraft might do the same.

Result: The PCs discover that the local starport they have reached is being visited by a large, vocal, sign-waving crowd of angry citizens who dislike the constant noise of incoming and outgoing spacecraft. So why did the people move next to a starport to begin with? Who knows? The PCs are not going to be made welcome, as the citizens hope to encourage spacecraft crews to land anywhere else but here.

The Invisible Starport

Source: The mother of an editor who worked at TSR, Inc. was a member of the French Resistance during World War II. Her tales of the struggle against the Nazi overlords were both shocking and inspiring. I wondered how PCs could aid in the struggle against one world's tyrants, and her stories came to mind. I also thought about the CIA's delivery of weapons to rebel groups in Central America; whether you approve of the latter, it does make for a fascinating adventure idea.

Result: The PCs are hired (perhaps by an underground rebel group or intelligence agency) to deliver large shipments of firearms and supplies to rebel forces on a world governed by a dictatorship. The starport that the PCs must land at is disguised as a remote farm site, with sheds and outbuildings actually being radar and communications devices. Approach to the world and entry into the atmosphere must be done in complete radio silence and secrecy. Upon landing, the PCs' ship is hidden in a barn. Fuel and maintenance supplies are available at the farmhouse. The danger of discovery is great, as the world's government is fairly advanced technologically.

"G'day, Mate!"

Source: Australia. I mean, this country actually has a space program, and it's had one for years (since World War II, yet). Think about it.

Result: The PCs land at Thissildoo (from "This'll do!"—a remark made by the pilot of the first colony ship to land here). Thissildoo is a starport on a world largely colonized by Australians. Everything that you can possibly think of that's Australian can be found at the starport here, even wallabies and wombats in a miniature zoo by the starport grounds. The world has vast areas of dangerous wilderness (the "Outback"), and there are any number of hunting, camping, and adventure opportunities to be found; safari tours can be arranged right at the starport. If you can master the accent and actually speak 'Strine as the GM, you've got it made.

The Big Underground

Source: My sixth-grade class visited Mammoth Cave in Kentucky years ago. I was quite impressed, especially with the stories of native peoples who once lived in and around the caverns themselves. The stuff I've read about flare stars came back to me, too.

Result: On a world washed by solar storms that rain down lethal amounts of radiation, colonists have moved into a series of caverns and artificial tunnels. Only robotic facilities are above ground. Landing lights mark out the starport, and there are sunken landing pits and elevators that can be covered over by giant sliding domes, similar to the lunar spaceport in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The landing pits are connected to the rest of the starport facilities by vast tunnels. Only scientists and strip miners dare venture on the surface. Everyone else is happy to be a "mole," and the PCs are quickly introduced to the "mole culture" of this planet. The surface is lifeless, with only a thin atmosphere, but it does have a stark majesty about it, thanks to the fantastic wind-sculpted rock formations.

Stacked Up Over Starland

Source: Have you ever been on a jet circling an airport for longer than it took to fly to that airport?

Result: One major world has few active starports but does enormous amounts of interstellar business and trade. The starports there are neither conveniently located nor "user friendly"; they have outdated equipment, staff problems, etc. Other starports are planned, but construction is held up for one reason or another. As a result, the PCs must wait in orbit for hours or days before they are given clearance to land. Once down, they must contend with an absurd number of problems, including bad air/space traffic control, obnoxious cargo handlers, and an indifferent bureaucracy.

"Anyone home? Hello?"

Source: I call a number of computer-game companies during the course of my regular work, and most of them have automated answering systems. I was once transferred to five different recorded voices before a human came on.

Result: One advanced but low-population nation has automated its starport as completely as perhaps anyone could. The characters are confronted by one robot after another, from cargo handlers to traffic control, until the PCs may actually wonder if any humans live here. Security forces are also robotic, though overseen by humans or aliens. The inhabitants are obviously proud of their accomplishments and cannot figure out why visitors feel so alienated and put off.

Crackdown

Source: Seven Days in May was a favorite book of mine when I was in high school. News reports usually carry word about a military takeover of one government or another every month, too. The Iraqi attack on Kuwait was interesting in the same regard, if you want an invasion rather than an army revolt to screw up the PCs' plans.

Result: The PCs land at a good-quality starport in a democratic nation. However, on their first or second night there, elements of the military stage a coup against the government. Rebel army units attempt to take over the starport to impound or destroy all starships on the ground. Fighting breaks out as the starport security guards (which might be privately owned or else loyal to the government) defend the port. The PCs and all other ship crews are caught in the middle and must fight to get their ships off the ground; they could be attacked after takeoff by air-force units, too.

If the PCs are taken captive, they could be sent to a prison camp from which they must try to escape to avoid prolonged incarceration, torture, or death. If they lose their ship, they will have to find some other way to leave the planet.

The Reaper's Scythe

Source: I edited an article on the Black Death as it might appear in fantasy campaigns. Several books also provide details on the spread of the plague during medieval times; *A Journal of the Plague Year,* by Daniel Defoe, and *A Distant Mirror,* by Barbara W. Tuchman, are highly recommended for their chilling accounts.

Result: A high-population, low-technology world is struck by the White Death, a pandemic so deadly that victims often catch it and die within one day. The PCs are asked to help ship medical supplies and vaccines to this world, and they are given inoculations before they go. However, the vaccine is only partially successful. PCs who fall victim to the White Death will become extremely ill, though they are not likely to die.

Meanwhile, the plague world itself is in chaos, with anarchy and violence spreading over the globe. The PCs might be forced to travel overland from the

starport to gain spare parts for their ship, thus seeing firsthand the magnitude of the disaster. Their ship might also be impounded by the world's government to help some corrupt government officials flee to a new world.

Beehive

Source: I wrote down the word "sleep" on my brainstorming list because I was sleepy and thought I could make up something for this column along that topic. I couldn't think of a thing until two editors at TSR mentioned that some hotels in Japan today will rent a tiny, enclosed bunk bed to you for the night. A TV is included in the bunk wall; showers and restrooms are down the hall nearby. You can lock yourself in the bunk by shutting the door, which has a window in it. Someone described it as like crawling into a man-sized microwave oven.

Result: The PCs arrive at a starport in an extremely crowded city. The starport or a nearby hotel has the only rooms available for the night—and guess what the rooms are like! This would be a great annoyance event, especially if one of the PCs is claustrophobic.

Gods For Every Occasion

Source: Mythology books say the Romans had gods of every kind, even going so far as to adopt the gods of other nations and make them their own (e.g., Mithras). Shrines were everywhere in Roman society. To this I added the thought that it is likely that our drive into outer space will affect the religious values of our descendants.

Result: Many starports the PCs visit across the galaxy have small chapels, shrines, and so forth placed in them, either set discretely off to the side or placed boldly right in front of the starport gates as well as everywhere else. Gods, patron saints, benevolent spirits, and what have you will be called upon by pilots and passengers alike to watch over their journeys. Religious pilgrims, missionaries, clergy, and followers might be extremely common at certain starports in holy areas or near church headquarters. Some of the PCs might be particularly devout and wish to promote the interests of their religion during their travels.

Forty Days and Nights

Source: At one point when I was in West Germany, it rained for a month straight without letup. Everyone blamed it on the Mount St. Helens' eruption, but whatever the cause, the end result was the coldest summer in many years.

Result: The starport at which the PCs land will be subjected to one particular weather condition (e.g., rain, snow, drought, fog, high winds, etc.) for a long period of time. The conditions will make themselves felt throughout whatever adventures the PCs have on this world. It may seem at times that the unusual weather is all that any local NPC can talk about.

Be Prepared

Source: I have no idea why I was thinking about the Boy Scouts recently, but it made its way into my brainstorming list anyway.

Result: The PCs, having landed at a normal starport, are approached by a local civilian official and asked if they would permit a guided tour of their starship by a group of local scouts—members of a youth organization, not the interstellar sort of scouts. If the PCs agree, their starship is carefully inspected by local police or starport officials for safety. Within 1-3 days, one or more large groups of juveniles, both human and alien, are herded aboard the ship by harried adults; the PCs are allowed to conduct the tours or may arrange for a local official to do so, after they explain what everything is. The comic potential of this adventure could be extreme if handled well.

Chains

Source: Slavery, as much as we hate it, still exists in some parts of today's world. Julius Lester's excellent book, *To Be a Slave,* offers firsthand details of the horrors of slavery as it existed in America many years ago. A particularly vile futuristic society could be fleshed out using this book and others like it.

Result: The PCs are scouting a newly discovered, human-settled world, only to find that the world's culture is based on slavery, which has been outlawed by the galactic government. Worse yet, the world has a minor starport at which some space merchants and piratical groups have been landing to engage in slave trading and other criminal acts. The PCs might be hired (or decide on their own) to do something about this situation, perhaps running weapons and supplies to escaped slaves, helping slaves flee to other worlds, or else destroying the criminal space forces and governments that support this institution. Note that this adventure openly violates the cherished "Prime Directive" of the *Star Trek* TV show and role-playing game.

Temporary Inconvenience

Source: For months, many of the interstate roads in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa were partially blocked by crews doing roadwork. I've been in airports that were having new construction and renovation performed on them, too.

Result: A particularly ill-equipped starport that the PCs knew and hated is now being rebuilt by the local government. That's the good news. The bad news is that conditions at the starport are now even worse than before because work crews and construction vehicles get in the way of traffic and cause delays of every imaginable sort. And there is the matter of the missing windows during the dead of winter, and the unmarked fresh concrete sidewalks across which PCs might wander.

On Strike

Source: On the way into Milwaukee, I always pass a food store that is being picketed by a union for reasons I've never figured out.

Result: The PCs arrive at a starport and find that the Cargo Handlers' Union, Local 12, has gone on strike. The Starport Mechanics and Electricians Federation refuses to cross the picket lines, too. The unions have a grievance against the starport authorities regarding wages and benefits that are being cut back. Starship crews arriving at this world will meet long delays in being unloaded by tired white-collar managers and paranoid "scabs" (nonunion workers hired to cover for the strikers). Worse, there is the high possibility of strike violence caused by either the striking workers or the starport authorities.

That will do for examples. You should get the idea of how easy it is to convert almost anything for use in your campaign. Just keep your eyes, your notebook—and your imagination—wide open. ❑

Into The Dark

The Weird West, Part I

by James Lowder

In his excellent book—titled, originally enough, *Western Films: A Complete Guide*—Brian Garfield notes that fantasy, not history, forms the basis for the trappings of the traditional Western. White-hatted good guys, black-hatted bad guys, high noon shoot-outs, and heart-of-gold saloon wenches had about as much to do with the historical frontier as, oh, Errol Flynn's outstanding *The Adventures of Robin Hood* had to do with 12th century England. That is to say, not a whole heck of a lot.

Since most Westerns contain as much fantasy as many films we normally identify by that label, you shouldn't be surprised to find some enterprising filmmakers playing up that angle. After all, if both Westerns and horror movies are popular, why not make a film that will draw both audiences?

For all you fans of TSR's BOOT HILL® role-playing game or I.C.E.'s *Western Hero* campaign book, this column and the one following should lead you to enough source material for a year's worth of strange adventures. Even SF and horror gamers will find some interesting and unusual things lurking in the Weird West.

You can't get any better	*****
Entertaining and enjoyable	****
There are worse films	***
Wait for cable	**
A waste of good tape	*

Curse of the Undead

1959, 76 Minutes
Universal
Director: Edward Dein
Cast: Eric Fleming, Michael Pate, Kathleen Crowley
***

Of the films I've watched for this column, this one is the most successful at grafting a horror theme onto a traditional Western. The plot revolves around a standard genre situation. When an upstanding doctor is murdered, his son goes gunning for the local villain, who's been after the doc's land for some time. Naturally, the hothead gets blown away, and it's up to his sister to get revenge.

This is where things get weird. The leather-clad hired gun who takes up her contract (Michael Pate) is more than meets the eye. Could it be that the gunslinger, Drake Robey, is responsible for the deaths of the town's most attractive young women, who've been turning up with strange puncture wounds on their necks? The local preacher, and rival for the heroine's affections, certainly thinks so.

The actors do a lot to make *Curse of the Undead* watchable. Michael Pate is suitably menacing as the mysterious gunslinger, and Eric Fleming is sincere to the point of sappiness as the righteous Preacher Dan. But even their good work can't counterbalance the myriad problems with the movie. The directing is pedestrian, the editing choppy. Every time Drake Robey appears, the soundtrack cuts in with "scary" music. Robey's horse even rears in slow motion; if that's not a dead giveaway that something's not right in the bunkhouse, I don't know what is.

Curse of the Undead has no right to be as fun to watch as it is, but there's no denying the film's entertainment value. Watch this one on a rainy Saturday afternoon instead of doing the bills or your homework and you won't be disappointed.

Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter

1965, 83 Minutes
Embassy
Director: William Beaudine
Cast: Narda Onyx, John Lupton, Cal Bolder
*½

William Beaudine directed well over 150 films in his career, and many claim this is the worst of a bad lot. It's a companion piece to his other Western-horror masterpiece, *Billy the Kid vs. Dracula*, which starred John Carradine as the vampire count.

In this timeless hunk of celluloid, we are treated to the tale of Maria Frankenstein, the famous scientist's *grand*child—despite what the title says. She and her brother have taken up residence in a deserted monastery in the Southwest, where there are plenty of electrical storms to power their experiments. The only thing Maria lacks is a hulking brute to house the synthetic brain she's perfected.

Wouldn't you know it, Jesse James's simpleminded, musclebound pal, Hank Tracy, just happens to get wounded, and Jesse must ask Maria for help.

Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter is one of those movies so bad it's fun to watch. The acting is on a level with most high school plays after a practice or two. John Lupton is the most unimpressive Jesse James ever, and Narda Onyx, as Maria, rants her terrible dialogue as if it were Shakespeare. The scenery was pulled from a high school play, too, right down to the poison bottle with a big skull and crossbones on it. And wait till you see the red plastic helmets the Frankensteins use in their brain wave transfusions!

Grim Prairie Tales

1990, 87 Minutes
Academy
Director: Wayne Coe
Cast: James Earl Jones, Brad Dourif, Scott Paulin
****

Not all Western-horror films are entertaining only for their ridicule value. *Grim Prairie Tales* is an truly worthwhile anthology film. Writer-director Coe takes his work seriously enough to challenge the viewer with mature stories, but the film never gets pompous enough that it can't poke fun at itself.

The main body of the film consists of four short tales. The first tells a rather standard story about the fate that awaits an old man who crosses sacred indian burial land. A very odd and rather disturbing story about a young store clerk who befriends a pregnant woman on the plain comes next. The ending it packs will certainly catch you by surprise.

The third is the most thought-provoking; in it, a little girl named Evie learns that the new homestead is not the Garden of Eden she thinks it is. This one

is packed full of symbolism—including a horrifying modern version of the tree of knowledge, and its moral content is bound to spark debate.

The final yarn is the best, "a story that'll stick to you like an eyeball to a cactus needle," as one of the characters in the framing tale claims. Unlike the other three, this story is out-and-out horror. Martin (Scott Paulin) is a dapper, but dangerous man competing for a lucrative position as a hired gun. He doesn't see himself as a killer, like the bloodsoaked butchers he faces off against. No, Martin sees himself as an artist. By the end of the tale, he learns otherwise, but not before a nightmarish animated dream sequence startles the audience and a lot of blood spills on the screen.

While the four stories are all engrossing enough, the framing tale makes *Grim Prairie Tales* a truly successful film. At the start of the movie, we meet Farley Deeds (Brad Dourif), a city-slicker crossing the prairie on his way home to his wife. As night falls, a bounty hunter named Morrison bursts into Farley's camp and jars the story into action. Played expertly by James Earl Jones, Morrison is instantly intriguing, a rough fellow with a corpse slung over his pack horse. He is also witty and quite personable.

Farley and Morrison begin to tell each other stories, which Coe presents as the various short tales noted above. Their commentary on storytelling—what makes a good tale, how a story should be told, and where tales come from—adds a self-reflective facet to the film, a facet that sets *Grim Prairie Tales* apart from most genre films.

That's being a bit too academic about it, though. The important thing is that Morrison and Farley are outstanding characters, brought to life by two fine actors. Sure, the stories they tell are good, but you'll find yourself waiting to see how they'll react in between each yarn (Farley's response to the second story is wonderful). Moreover, they develop as characters over the course of the film, and Coe subtly shows how the two men who seemed so different in the opening scenes are really quite similar.

Whether you're a Western fan or not, *Grim Prairie Tales* deserves a spin on your VCR. It'll stick to you like an eyeball to a cactus needle.

Ghost Town

1988, 85 Minutes
Empire/New World
Director: Richard Governor
Cast: Frank Luz, Jimmie Skaggs, Catherine Hickland
***½

When Kate leaves her husband-to-be at the altar and heads off across the desert in her convertible, she never expected to be kidnapped by a ghost, but that's just what happens in this better-than-average funhouse ghost story.

After Kate disappears, Deputy Langley (Frank Luz) begins a search that plants him in a Western twilight zone, right in the middle of a ghost town. The place is populated by the unhappy spirits of the good townsfolk who once lived there. They'd like to leave, but they can't. The evil and equally ghostly , Devlin wants to keep them around as playthings for him and his men. He wants to keep Kate around, too, since she reminds him of a dancehall girl he killed when he was still alive.

Ghost Town tries hard to keep the viewer off-balance, and it succeeds quite often in doing just that. Deputy Langley runs across various spectres during his stay in Cruz El Diablo (really subtle, guys). Some are more helpful and more tangible than others. Still, you're never quite sure when some friendly spirit is going to disappear or an unfriendly one pop in to take a few shots at the hero.

Luz is effective as Deputy Langley, and Hickland passable, if rather whiney, as the girl every ghost seems to want. As Devlin, Jimmie Skaggs is menacing and malevolent, but his performance sometimes borders too close to a parody of Jack Palance. You could pick worse models, I suppose.

Governor makes some good use of his special effects budget, but the best visuals are the simplest—the ghost that blasts Langley's truck early on being one of the more effective tricks. Some nice point-of-view camerawork adds to the excitement. Yet there are also times when weak effects dampen the exuberant mood of the film, and the ending is really pretty dumb. Has the director done ninja films in the past, I wonder?

Ghost Riders

1987, 85 Minutes
Prism
Director: Alan Stewart
Cast: Jim Peters, Cari Powell, Mike Ammons
½

If you're ever wondering how important a professional sound mixer is to a film, rent this dog. You'll want to send donations to the sound men's union in Hollywood after ten minutes of *Ghost Riders*.

1886. The Barley family has been murdered, and the killer is strung up by a lynch mob and hung—but not before he can curse the preacher leading the mob. Cut to the present. Guess what? Yup, you got it, his descendants are being chased by mysterious ghostly riders. Luckily, one of them is a historian specializing in the Old West; "how convenient," as the Church Lady would say.

You've seen this one a dozen times. The filmmakers couldn't come up with enough of a story to fill an hour, so they added lots of footage of people hiking or driving. (The film lasts a half-hour if you fast forward through these time-wasting scenes.) The cast is made up of people who double as crewmembers; their acting makes *Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter* look like Branagh's *Henry V*.

The most amazing thing about *Ghost Riders* is the absolutely terrible sound. Whoever mixed this honker had never worked on a sound board before, because the background noise—birds tweeting, gravel crunching underfoot, and so on—consistently drowns out the dialogue! I'll bet the reason no one at Prism has noticed this is they've never stayed awake through the whole thing.

We continue our excursion into the Weird West next month with a bald killer robot that thinks he's a gunfighter. ❑

With Great Power

Alternate campaign settings for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, Part One

by Dale A. Donovan

Many superhero campaigns take place in New York, or another large, often faceless, city. While there is nothing wrong with that, there are an incredible number of interesting, exciting, and diverse locales to explore in the MARVEL UNIVERSE. The list presented here is by no means comprehensive. The places and organizations mentioned in this column were chosen because there is at least some information available to gamers via TSR Inc.'s MARVEL SUPER HEROES game products.

Marvel-Earth

On the Marvel version of our own planet, there are numerous locations and organizations that could support some fascinating adventures, or even an entire campaign. Listed below are a few with the most adventure possibilities.

S.H.I.E.L.D.: Marvel-Earth's best covert-operations agency would make a great setting for an espionage-oriented campaign. Once before, S.H.I.E.L.D had a "Super-Agent" program, but the only true success from that program was Wendell Vaughn—the hero, Quasar. Perhaps the new S.H.I.E.L.D. is starting a revamped program. This campaign set-up would explain how all the heroes came together, recruited by S.H.I.E.L.D. This setting would also allow them access to high-tech equipment, numerous resources, and contacts with law-enforcement agencies around the world.

This type of campaign would need to be run and played a little differently than a standard superhero campaign. Flashy costumes, extravagant powers, and secret civilian identities would be out of the question. Stealth, undercover operations, and nondescript powers would be the order of the day. If your players are old hands at "standard" superhero campaigns, it could be quite a challenge for them to role-play in this setting. They would not be able to fall back on their powers to get them out of a jam—especially if they are undercover as "normal people." Similar campaigns could involve Project: Pegasus, The Vault, HYDRA, and A.I.M. For more information on S.H.I.E.L.D., see the *Gamer's Handbook of the MARVEL UNIVERSE™, #6, 1990 Character Updates (MU #6).*

Eternals/Deviants: These two powerful Celestials-created offshoots of humanity still have dealings with the other inhabitants of Earth. Recently, most of Earth's Eternals left the planet to explore the universe; some few stayed behind. The PC heroes could be part of that contingent, and, like several other Eternals (Sersi and Makkari, for example), could become more active in Earth's affairs. They could work against their traditional enemies, the Deviants, or they could protect Earth from high-powered, cosmic attackers, invaders, supervillains, etc.

Heroes in this campaign would be quite powerful, since all Eternals are effectively immortal and have control over every molecule of their bodies. From the GM's point of view, however, this just means the PCs will come up against the *really* nasty villains, aliens, Deviants, etc. A campaign of this type would be the perfect opportunity for the players to create and use some truly powerful heroes. For more information on Eternals, see *MU#2. MU#1* contains information on their traditional foes, the Deviants.

Inhumans: This genetic offshoot of humanity, created by the Kree, could easily generate PC heroes. Though they now live on the Moon, the Inhumans lived for a long time on Earth and still have dealings with Earth's heroes. Perhaps the PCs are distant cousins of the ruling family, or are just well enough off so they can pursue their own interests—being heroes. They could explore their home—the Blue Area of the Moon, also the home of the Watcher, or they could make the trip to Earth. Since Inhumans are sensitive to pollution, the PCs could become eco-crusaders who decide to clean up the planet.

Inhumans generally have only one superpower; this is a great way for the GM to limit the power of the PCs. Many Inhumans also have an unusual appearance. Since the major occupation of the Inhumans is science, the PCs could develop, or have access to, high-tech equipment. PCs in this campaign would need to work closely together, since their power would be limited. For more information on Inhumans, see *MU#2.*

Savage Land/Pangea: This lush, tropical jungle hidden under Antarctica has been the site of many superhero adventures, including recent story lines in the *Uncanny X-Men* and *Namor, the Sub-Mariner* comics. Perhaps the PCs are Savage Land Mutates (originally created by Magneto) who decide to explore the world outside the Savage Land. The Savage Land could also support more mainstream heroes who merely use the Savage Land as their base of operations. Since the Savage Land is populated by dinosaurs and other "extinct" creatures, supervillains lying low or working on their next big scheme, and Zaladane, who wants to take her army of Mutates and conquer the rest of the world, the Savage Land holds many opportunities for heroes.

Primitive or wilderness-oriented heroes would fit right into this type of campaign. Perhaps the heroes are the leaders of a tribe of non-powered natives. The PCs must protect them, teach them, and lead them. Being in charge can often put a lot of pressure on PCs who are accustomed to acting on impulse. The tropical setting could also lend itself to jungle warfare (perhaps against Zaladane and her Mutate forces). For more on the Savage Land, see *MU#3* and MA4 *The Fantastic Four Compendium.*

These four campaign concepts are merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to exploring Marvel Earth. Other possible adventure locales include Atlantis, Mt. Wundagore, Subterranea, Wakanda, and such "mundane" places as Britain and the rest of Europe, Asia, the Pacific Rim, and wilderness areas around the world.

Marvel Space & Alternate Dimensions

As expansive and diverse as it is, even Marvel Earth can't compare to the adventuring possibilities available to

those brave enough to seek their fortune (and Karma) in Marvel's version of outer space. Numerous alien races, galactic empires, Galactus himself, and even other dimensions can await the heroes. Some "humans" already live in space, even if it is still within the boundaries of our solar system: the above-mentioned Inhumans and the branch of Eternals residing on Saturn's moon, Titan.

Heroes who make Marvel Space their home need not be as powerful as the Silver Surfer to survive. They can possess a starship, a power that allows them to travel through space, a space-warp or teleportation power, a dimension-hopping power or device, etc. The possibilities are truly limitless. For information on space travel in the MARVEL UNIVERSE, see *To the ends of the MARVEL UNIVERSE* by David E. Martin, DRAGON® Magazine #159.

Galactic Empires: The Skrull, Kree, and Shi'ar empires all have detailed histories that can provide ready-made campaign backgrounds. Whether the PCs are members of one of these races, or are humans working with or against one or more of them, taking on a galactic empire is a big job. These empires also tend to go to war with one another. A campaign could be set in either of the Kree-Skrull wars or in the upcoming (as of this writing) Kree-Shi'ar war. Heroes at war is an interesting concept. Do they stick to their ideals and fight by the generally-accepted superhero rules (no killing, etc.), or are all bets off? Heroes could also become space-faring pirates like the Starjammers.

There are more alien races out there which, at one time or another, coveted Earth. The Badoon aren't that strong now, but by the 30th Century, they will have conquered our planet. The Brood have already tried to infest humans (mutants in this case) with their eggs. Perhaps they will throw caution to the wind and prepare a full-scale invasion. More information on the Brood and the Shi'ar is available in MA1 *Children of the Atom.*

Speaking of invasions, the Horde story line from Marvel's *Strikeforce Morituri* comic, could make a great campaign. Even though it is not in the normal Marvel continuity, it could make for some great role-playing and combat scenes as the heroes—given powers that are slowly killing them—fight to win as many victories against the Horde's superior firepower and technology as possible before their time runs out.

Asgard/Olympus: This sort of campaign would be a dream come true for many superhero game players—the chance to literally play "gods." Adventure with the likes of Thor or Hercules, receive secret orders and missions from Odin or Zeus, and protect the realm from giants and cyclopses. PCs could adventure in their mystical homes of Asgard or Olympus, or they could throw in their lot with quaint little humans.

This type of campaign could involve regal throne rooms, subtle court intrigues, and noble role-playing. After all, the PCs are gods, and they will be expected to act in the best tradition of Greek and Norse legends. This could become quite a swashbuckling campaign (a la the Warriors Three), with most warriors of the realm walking about with swords girded on and so forth. Heroes need not be on the power levels of Thor and Hercules, as even "normal" Asgardians or Olympians are quite tough when compared to humans.

Negative Zone: This is an anti-matter universe the size of the matter-version of the MARVEL UNIVERSE. With a universe of this size, and with the vast majority of that universe unexplored (even in the comics), there are infinite adventure possibilities. PC heroes could be Earthmen sent to the Zone by some villain's trap, they could be in search of some valuable material or medicine needed back on Earth, or they could be freedom fighters warring against one or more of the Zone's tyrannical dictators; Annihilus, Blastaar, and Stygorr.

Many heroes could be involved in a Negative Zone campaign. But, unless the entire campaign is to take place there, they will need some way to safely travel within, to, and from the Zone. Heroes in this campaign would brace many of the problems facing heroes in any Marvel Space campaign—transport, life support, finding edible food, etc. Therefore, heroes who are relatively self-sufficient (can fly, don't need to eat or breath as regularly as normal, etc.) would fare better. More information on the Negative Zone can be found in MA4 *The Fantastic Four Compendium* and in MSL2 *Warlord of Baluur.*

Alternate Universes: Of Marvel Comics' numerous graphic novels, several could support alternative campaigns. What if, in *Emperor Doom,* Captain America did not break the Purple Man's mental control of him? What if the Purple man had not died? Victor Von Doom would still rule the world, with most of the world working for him, either willingly or via the Purple Man's mind control.

The PCs could be resistant or immune to the mind control and would have to work covertly to find other heroes to wage a guerilla war against Doom's forces. They would need to develop some means of breaking the mind control to help tip the odds back in their favor. This could be a great, long-term campaign full of firefights, ambushes, treachery, spying and reconnaissance missions, and hero- vs.-hero battles in the best Marvel tradition.

The Futurians graphic novel does not take place in the normal Marvel continuity, but it is a wonderful story and could make a great campaign. In the future, Earth is doomed to die. After experimenting on the Sun, the evil Inheritors discover they have damaged it, and life on Earth is threatened. They escape by going back in time. The Futurians are normal, modern-day humans who are transformed into superbeings to combat the Inheritors' schemes on present-day Earth.

The PC heroes could take the roles of the Futurians, or they could be the next batch of people to undergo the process that created the first Futurians. Their primary enemies would be the Inheritors.

There are many more races and places to explore in the MARVEL UNIVERSE. Don't forget about Ego, the Living Planet, Galactus' worldship, the Collector's ship, all the Infinity Gauntlet tie-ins, Subatomica, Jarella's world of K'ai, the planets Xandar, Galador, and so on. With a little imagination and research, you can take your heroes, and your campaign to new heights. ❑

THE STORY SO FAR: SCHLIMBESSER V. SCHLIMBESSER -- A MEDIOCRE AUTHOR SEEKS TO DISSOLVE HIS MARRIAGE TO TAKE OFF -- LITERALLY -- WITH A MARTIAN...
ARE THERE ALIENS AMONG US?
BEN CAXTON, HERE -- WHEN I INTERVIEWED YOUR WIFE SHE STATED YOU WANTED TO COME TO A SETTLEMENT SO YOUR AFFAIRS WON'T COME OUT IN COURT. WHAT KIND OF AFFAIRS?
NO COMMENT!
IS THIS A PUBLICITY STUNT FOR YOUR NEXT BOOK?
I'M TIM O'HARA OF THE SUN! NASA SAYS YOU'RE A CRACKPOT! ANY COMMENT?
WHEW! TALK ABOUT SPACE INVASION
OKAY, MR. HARSHAW, YOU WANTED TO SEE US -- HAS YOUR CLIENT DECIDED TO -- MR. HARSHAW? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
LOOK, MS. WOLFF! I TOOK ALL THIS TALK ABOUT MARTIANS WITH A GRAIN OF SALT! BUT...
WHEN WE WERE ON OUR WAY HERE, JENNY SAID "VIBES" MADE HER DRIVE US TO -- TO IT! I'M LUCKY TO GET BACK IN ONE PIECE!
YOU LEFT HER?
GOOD LORD!
LOOK, I'LL GIVE YOU THE LOCATION...
PART THREE OF THREE
WOLFF & BYRD
COUNSELORS OF THE MACABRE
REMEMBER, MR. SCHLIMMBESSER -- YOUR WIFE DOESN'T HAVE TO TELL US ANYTHING WITHOUT HER LAWYER PRESENT
DEAL WITH IT, MR. BYRD -- BUT IF JENNY HARMED MY MARTIAN VENUS, I'LL --
WHITEY... DEAR WHITEY...
© 1991 BATTON LASH
JENNY? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? YOU -- YOU SOUND SO... PLEASANT!
I COMMUNICATED WITH THE ALIEN, WHITEY! I UNDERSTAND!
TELL MY LAWYERS -- I'M GOING TO WANT TO GET THAT IN WRITING!
I WANT TO MAKE THINGS EASY FOR WHITEY -- THE MARTIAN HAS UNLOCKED THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE FOR ME!
OF COURSE, AS LAWYERS, I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO COMPREHEND THE CONCEPTS OF LOVE AND COMPASSION WHICH AWAIT US IN THE STARS
UH HUH
YOU WORKED WONDERS WITH JENNY, HONEY! BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOU'VE COME BACK FOR ME!
SAY -- WHAT'S THIS?
OH, I GET IT -- THIS MUST BE THE MARTIAN CODA FOR LIVING IN HARMONY! I'LL LEAVE IT WITH MY ATTORNEYS AS PART OF MY ESTATE! AFTER ALL, WORLD PEACE IS THE LEAST I COULD DO FOR MY HOME PLANET WHILE WE SET UP OUR HOME ON MARS. WE'LL --
LET'S GO, DARLING
DARLING?!
MR. SCHLIMMBESSER, JENNY'S THE ONE HE WANTS...
HE?
WERE YOU EVER SURE THE MARTIAN WAS A SHE?
HM!
WHY, UH, NO! I JUST ASSUMED MARTIAN GENDERS WERE LIKE OURS -- HEY!
HEY! COME BACK! COME BACK OR I'LL -- I'LL -- I'LL -- SUE!!
I'M AFRAID IT'S GONE BEYOND A DOMESTIC DISPUTE, MR. SCHLIMMBESSER
APPARENTLY, JENNY MADE QUITE AN IMPRESSION THE NIGHT SHE CRASHED YOUR LAST RENDEZVOUS WITH THE MARTIAN!
THAT'S RIGHT -- SHE -- I MEAN, HE, I MEAN, THE MARTIAN -- NEVER CONTACTED ME AGAIN AFTER THAT NIGHT...
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY MR. SCHLIMMBESSER -- WHY SHOULD EARTH BE THE ONLY PLANET WHOSE INHABITANTS ARE FICKLE?
THEN WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
I HAVE A FEELING THAT WHEN YOU TRANSLATE THE FIRST TWO WORDS YOU'LL SEE IT'S A UNIVERSAL MESSAGE --
-- A MESSAGE WHICH BEGINS "DEAR JOHN...!

Bookwyrms

Read the Book! Play the Game!

by David Cook

More than a few people read and enjoy TSR's FORGOTTEN REALMS™ novels; more than a few people play role playing games. A few even use the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting. Those folks who do can add a greater depth to their game sessions by exploiting the novels.

Just as your understanding of the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign world can improve your appreciation and enjoyment of novels like *Horselords, Crusade,* or *The Parched Sea,* knowledge of the stories and characters in the novels can improve your campaign.

There are two ways this can happen. The most obvious occurs when you are running an adventure or series of adventures that recreates the story of a novel or trilogy. Events and non-player characters tend to match up. There are changes, some obvious, some subtle between the two (so sneaky players can't read the book and anticipate everything). Knowing the events of the novel gives you, as DM, a better understanding of the adventure's overall structure and goals.

When adventures and novels match, books can become a gold mine of information. Read the book once for pleasure and then go back and read it for useful game information. As you do, mark passages that have pertinent information. In the module or on a separate piece of paper, make note of the book's page number and topic. This is particularly useful for descriptions of places and NPCs. For shorter bits of information, you don't have to mark up your novel. Simply make a note of the name of the guard or what someone eats for breakfast. Look also for voices and actions you can translate directly into your role playing. Does the guard scratch himself while he talks? Is the innkeeper's voice deep and husky? You can use these like stage descriptions while you run the game.

Finally, pay attention to how the NPCs that appear in the novel talk and react to situations. These are clues into their motivations and likely behaviors. If you make a list of these for the important NPCs, their reactions in your game will seem much more consistent and natural—and you won't have to scramble when your PCs do something unexpected.

For example (using my own novel, *Horselords*), you are running an adventure set around the story of the Horde Wars. Page one has a description of Quaraband, the capital: *There were no permanent buildings only domelike yurts of white and black spread in the shallow bowl of the valley. The little round shelters were scattered in dense clumps, large and small, radiating out from the river that meandered across the valley from the south.* —etc.

One of the principal villains in the adventure is General Chanar Ong Kho. There are several descriptions, allowing you to choose the one that suits you. It might be this one, from page 236: *The general's arrogance was almost palpable but he still cut a handsome figure. His braids were long and full and his mustache carefully trimmed. Dressed in armor, he looked the powerful warrior he truly was, one of the seven valiant men.* Or this one from page one: . . . *sunlight played off the burnished metal scales of his armor. The light emphasized the luster of Chanar's thick braids and the thin sheen of sweat on the shaven patch at the top of his head.*—etc. Elsewhere, the general is described as "arrogant," "swaggering," and "contemptuous," all clues to his behavior.

From elsewhere in the novel, you can collect useful bits of information—the dress of the guards ("a grizzled group, seasoned campaigners wearing dirty black *kalats* stained with blood."), the taste of kumiss ("bitter"), even the punishment for crimes (usually beating). By noting all these details, you can fill in the gaps in your adventure and make your world live.

This is all well and good, you say, but my campaign is in Waterdeep so my PCs aren't dealing with nomadic horsemen on the steppe—*Horselords* or any other book not set in Waterdeep isn't going to be much help to me. Even in situations like this, where your campaign is far from the places described in the plot, the novels can provide useful material.

Try converting details from the novels into rumors and reports from distant lands. The novels often tell stories of major events involving the powerful and important. Such events don't fade away, unremembered and unremarked upon. You should also consider how distant events effect your local campaign. In the case of *Horselords,* garbled tales of huge barbarian armies reach Waterdeep. Furthermore, the riders have been plundering caravans, so exotic goods from Shou Lung (including spices and perhaps rare magical components) have dramatically increased in value. Few caravan masters are going east either, so the city's economy suffers a little. There are more out-of-work caravan guards and so fewer job opportunities for the characters.

By the time of *Crusade,* the last book of the Empires Trilogy, the repercussions in Waterdeep can be quite dramatic. Armies from Cormyr are headed east. Many of the mercenaries normally based in Waterdeep have followed, sensing the chance to make a profit. Banditry outside the city has also increased, since much of the local hired security has gone. Rumors of a greater Cormyrian empire and huge treasure hauls soon follow. And then shortly after the war, the veterans will be returning home if they're lucky. All of these things will impact daily life in Waterdeep.

One feature of the novels that may not be immediately apparent is that they fit into a timeline. Generally, each new book released takes place after the events of earlier novels. Thus, the Empire Trilogy takes place after the upheavals of the Avatar Trilogy, while the Maztica series takes place during and shortly after Empires. Knowing this, you can refer to some novels as the "old news" compared with the latest events in the Realms.

Finally, there is the purest use of the novels in your game. Not every novel has an accompanying adventure published by TSR. If this is the case, then the novel may be your sole sourcebook for information and events of that region. ❑

Classifieds

Italy: Sixteen-year-old gamer looking for other players in the Milan area. I speak English and Italian. I would also like pen pals. Please write: Josephine Petley, Via Mons. Paleari #16, 200-10 Pogliano Milanese, Milano, Italy.

Georgia: Two male, 12-year-old gamers in the Roswell area are looking for fellow D&D® game *players* to join our group. We're also seeking people familiar with the AD&D® game and with the DRAGONLANCE™ novels and the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ novels. Please contact: Peter Locke, 155 Truehedge Trace, Roswell, GA 30075, 404-992-9560, or Stephen Dmetruk, 2730 Hazy Hollow Run, Roswell, GA 30076, 404-642- 1740.

Indiana: Experienced (and desperate) GM/player seeking a gaming group or people interested in forming a group in the Lafayette area. I am experienced with the AD&D game, D&D game, Lords of Creation, GAMMA WORLD® game, Paranoia, BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ game, and the TMNT/Heroes Unlimited system. I'm interested in learning new games. Please contact Jim Tesmer, 902 S. 11th St., Lafayette, IN 47905, 317-742-4603.

Kansas: I'm a 29-year-old gamer living in Wichita. I usually play in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. I am interested in getting a Network club started in the Wichita area. I have over five years experience in the AD&D game. Please contact Gerald at 316-945-8303.

Michigan: I'm 26 years old and would like to start an AD&D 2nd Edition game. I'm looking for players in the Downriver area. Please contact: Richard L. Hall, 13698 Walnut St., Southgate, MI 48195, or call 313-285- 6025. All letters will be answered.

New Jersey: Attention Serious Gamers: Existing group in search of gamers to start a Network Club. We are currently running a campaign set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS world using the AD&D 2nd Edition game. Write or call: Maple Shade Gaming Society, P.O. Box 30, Maple Shade, NJ 08052, 609-779-1393.

Ohio: I'm looking for a club to join in the Springfield/Dayton area. Network members who are not part of a group may also contact: William E.J. Baldwin, 625 W. Pleasant St., Springfield, OH 45506.

Oklahoma: Network events are run monthly in Oklahoma. If you or your organization is interested is participating, sponsoring, or just attending these events, write or call Donald Gordon Dennis, 11001 Magnolia Park, Oklahoma City, OK 73120. Phone before 10:00 p.m. 405-751-1795. Events will be run at Sooner Con, Warp II, Dream Con, OKON, Psurealcon, Thundercon, Contest, and others.

General: I am a 16-year-old gamer/comic collector seeking pen pals. My favorite game is Champions. My four favorite comic characters are Captain America, Nightcrawler, Captain Atom, and Jeremy Feeple. I'm willing to talk about any game and SF, too. Write: Samuel Marlow, Route 5, Crest Drive, Ringgold, GA 30736.

General: Wanted: Information on the company GAMELORDS, LTD., who used to publish the Thieves' Guild games. I am looking for names and ways to contact people. I also am interested in buying copies of Thieves Guild II, VI, and the Free City of Haven. Doug Smith, 16 Breed Street #3, Lynn, MA 01902.

General: I'm a 16-year-old gamer seeking world-wide pen pals and gamers in the Ottawa Valley area. Also, I'd like to buy out-of-print AD&D game products including: DEITIES & DEMIGODS, The Rogues Gallery, original modules such as G1, G3, T1, and anything by Gary Gygax. I read, write, enjoy fantasy, and collect comics. Give me a call at 613-283-0983, or write Dwight T. Fidler, R.R. #4, Smiths Falls, Ontario, Canada K7A 4S5.

General: I'm looking for pen pals who are familiar with the AD&D game, STAR FRONTIERS™ game, and the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game. I'd like to learn more games. Please write: Torir Bjorn Ludvitesson, Reynigrund 2, 300 Akranes, Iceland.

General: I would like to locate and buy the following items; I'm willing to pay double the Mail Order Hobby Shop's most recent price. The Items need not be in excellent condition, but I must insist that all original materials be included—especially maps: FR3 Empires of the Sands (TSR 9224), N4 Treasure Hunt (TSR 9185), N1 Cult of the Reptile God (TSR 9063), H1 Bloodstone Pass (TSR 9122), H2 The Mines of Bloodstone (TSR 9168), H3 Bloodstone Wars (TSR 9200). Contact: Norman Jessee Jr., Rt. #3. P.O. Box 482, Castlewood, VA 24224.

General: Miniatures Wanted: I'm trying to expand my ever-growing miniatures collection. Dwarves, elves, and white, gold, and spectral dragons from the old Grenadier Dragon of the Month series are a must. If you have any miniature you no longer want, please contact Mike Mierzwa, 9601 Creek Road, Forestville, NY 14062.

General: Thirteen-year-old looking for pen pals anywhere. I am interested in fantasy, science fiction, the D&D game, computers, and planes. Please write: Jaime Fernades, 8728 Falls Chapel Way, Potomac, MD 20854.

General: Twenty-seven-year-old gamer with over 15 years experience looking for others who wish to confer on designing a game system for the medieval fantasy genre or who just wish to correspond. All letters will be answered. Please write: Scott Tolle, Box 278, Atlanta, IN 46031-0278.

General: Seventeen-year-old GM/Player looking gamers in the Niagara Falls area. Also looking for pen pals of any age close to my own. My interests include the AD&D game, computers (IBM), reading, football, and rugby. All letters will be answered. Write: Andrew Hoshkiw. P.O. Box 404, Niagara Falls, Canada L2E 6T8.

Conventions

U-CON, November 15-17
Ann Arbor, MI
The Ann Arbor gaming community is pleased to host another U-CON. The convention, held at Washtenaw Community College, features a wide variety of imaginative RPGs, historical miniatures, and strategy games. For information write: U-CON, P.O. Box 4491, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-4491.

PENTACON VII, November 16-17
Fort Wayne, IN
The Northeastern Indiana Gamers' Association will sponsor its first two-day convention at the Grand Wayne Center in downtown Fort Wayne. Tournaments include a two-round Network AD&D® game event, the NIGA Spotlight tournament, and an all-day miniature simulation. Other events include BattleTech, Morrow Project, naval miniatures, Darkus Thel, boardgames, and other role playing. Painting and costume contests, door prizes, and a flea market round out the offerings. Pre-registration is $8 for both days, $5 for one day. For details write: PENTACON. P.O. Box 11176, Fort Wayne, IN 46856 or call Steve at 219-356-4209.

COCOA CON '91 December 27- 29
Grantville, PA
This convention, held at the Holiday Inn in Grantville, will be sponsored by Pastimes Hobby and the Fantasy Fortress Gaming Club. Events include a miniatures painting contest, monster design contest, magic design contest, and 24-hour open gaming. Game events include the AD&D game, Advanced Squad Leader, BattleTech, Shadowrun, BOOT HILL® game, Silent Death, Vampire, Circus Maximus, Kingmaker, and many more. Pre-registration is $8 for the weekend. For information write: COCA CON '91, 210 South Grant Street, Palmyra, PA 17076 or call 717-838-9784 during the evening.

Wright State University Game Fair, January 18-19 *Fairborn, OH*
Join us at Wright State University's main campus for a weekend of gaming featuring introductory sessions of The Fifth Cycle by Shield Games, a parents' seminar on what role-playing games are all about, and several Network events. Registration-fee discounts are available to Network members and to all gamers who attend both days. Players and game masters seeking more information should write: Scott Hala, Game Fair Director, WSU Adventurers' Guild, P.O. Box 31016, Dayton, OH 45431-0016.

ConnCon '92, March 27-28
Danbury, CT
You're invited! Please join us for role-playing games, war games, miniatures, seminars, a miniatures painting contest, an art show, dealers area, and awards banquet. RSVP ConnCon, P.O. Box 444, Sherman, CT 06784-0444.

Atlanticon '92, July 3-5
College Park, MD
Atlanticon welcomes you to the College Park campus of the University of Maryland, just 30 minutes south of Baltimore and close to many sites in Washington D.C. The schedule of events includes adventure game tournaments, a dealer area, new product demonstrations, seminars, and a game auction. For information write: A.D.F., Inc. P.O. Box 91, Beltsville, MD 20704-0091.

Potion Puzzle Solution

	Color	Material	Shape	Smell	Effect
Potion 1	blue	metal	slender	foul	flying
Potion 2	green	glass	squat	sweet	giant strength
Potion 3	orange	crystal	square	bitter	longevity
Potion 4	purple	ceramic	round	fresh	climbing
Potion 5	red	wood	oblong	none	healing